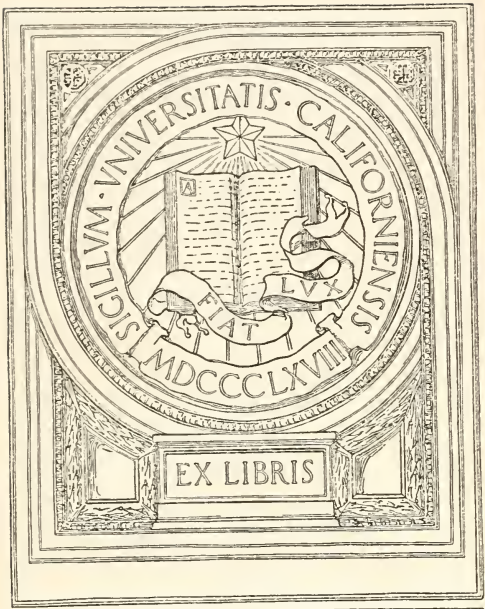
WANNETA THE SIOUX

WARREN K. MOOREHEAD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Wanneta, the Sioux

By

WARREN K. MOOREHEAD

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To my dear father,

WILLIAM G. MOOREHEAD, D.D.,

WHOSE KIND ADVICE, ASSISTANCE, AND PARENTAL INSTRUCTION HAVE BEEN OF INESTIMABLE VALUE, THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE LOVINGLY DEDICATED.

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CHAPTER I.

THERE was an unusual stir and commotion in the Indian village. The squaws on this particular morning when our story opens, were up at break of day, the smouldering embers of the camp-fires were raked together, and the blaze rekindled. The remnants of food in the tipis were prepared and hastily eaten, and, as soon as the ponies could be caught and brought in from the plain, nearly every man, woman, and child mounted and rode off to the agency buildings five miles distant to receive rations.

One little Indian girl and her mother did not go with the others. The squaw was the wife of Two Bears, and her name was Omaha. Two Bears was one of the head warriors and council men of his people, and stood nearly on an equality with the second chief, Gopher. Omaha, his squaw, was named after the tribe of Indians from whom she had been captured, the Omahas. In Indian history it often happens that a woman is seized during a fight or raid upon a village. She is adopted by her captors, and if beautiful, marries one of the braves. The women in the tribe regard her just as highly as they do

any of the squaws whom they have known since childhood.

Two Bears and Omaha had a young daughter about ten years of age, a son some twenty-one years old, and a bright, beautiful girl of eighteen years, who was the pet of the entire village, and bore the name of Wan' ne-ta, or Bright Star. On this day Wanneta was expected home, and Two Bears had gone to the agency for the supplies for the family, leaving his squaw and child to await her return. Three years before, her parents had consented to let Wanneta go East with a missionary to be educated in one of the schools for Indian girls. She had been away for three years, and although at first she would rather have returned to her father's tipi, yet she determined to remain through the entire course. While her mother and little sister are awaiting her return, let us follow her father to the agency and see what is going on there.

Two Bears had gone with the rest of the tribe to obtain supplies for his family. Food is issued at all the Sioux agencies on every alternate Wednesday morning, and the occasion is looked forward to with great interest by all the Indians. The day is commonly known as ration-day and is always followed by feasting, dancing, and other demonstrations of joy. There is then issued to every very large family, or to two small families, a keg of meal and a live steer. This would be amply sufficient to keep them in food until the next issue of rations were they at all economical, but they always gorge themselves to the utmost capacity during the next

few days and nights; hence, when two weeks have passed, they are often in sore need of food.

The Indians set out, as we have said, on their ponies for the agency buildings, five miles distant from their village. They did not in this short ride observe any order of movement, such as they would carry into effect if going to battle. Each man took care of himself, and in the race for their meal and beef the chief was no better than the common warrior. The agency buildings in the year 1875 consisted of a small, two-story frame house where the agent lived, three small houses where the assistants lived, a long, low building wherein was the store and the distributing office, a large warehouse where were kept the bulk of the stores, and a little log fort which could be used in case of attack by the Sioux. There was a large enclosure of some four or five acres close at hand, known as the corral. In this enclosure was driven, the morning of ration-day, enough cattle to supply the entire tribe. The government, which furnished all this, had contracts with large firms south of the Black Hills for the supply of these cattle. They were brought by train within about a hundred miles of the agency and then driven overland. All the supplies had to be brought overland this hundred miles also.

When the horde of Indian horsemen came in sight of the agency buildings they scattered out over an extent of several acres, and approached in their usual manner with loud "ki-yis" and much flaunting of blankets, feathers, and streamers. It was a very clear day, and the sight presented by these Sioux—who, by the way,

are the most superb horsemen in the entire West—as they rode across the prairie decked out in all their trappings and finery of the most fantastic hues, was one never to be forgotten.

Upon reaching their destination the men dismounted, and, leaving the squaws and children who had been lumbering along in the rear, for the warriors were on the best horses and had given the squaws and children the old and broken-down ones, entered the agency building and stood before the distributing clerk. Here they reported their names, and each head of family, or, in the case of small families, each man who represented some ten or twelve persons, received two tickets on the warehouse keeper. With their tickets they passed in a long row in front of the warehouse platform. Here, upon presentation of one of them, the warehouse man and his assistant rolled a keg of meal out on the platform, and the Indian who had just surrendered his ticket, seized it and bore it in triumph to his squaw, who took possession. This was repeated until as many kegs had been distributed as there had been tickets presented.

The second ticket was presented to the employees in charge of the corral. These are counted, and as many steers turned out as there are tickets. The men know how many Indians draw rations, so that the number of animals is just sufficient to satisfy the demand. At a given signal the gates are opened and the cattle let loose. The men have meanwhile mounted their ponies, and as soon as the first steer makes its appearance, they set up a great yell, and the terrified animals pour out of the pen,

filling the air with loud bellowings. The Indians surround the herd and drive it toward their village, the squaws, meanwhile, coming slowly behind with their children and the keg of meal on the backs of the patient, worn-out ponies. When near the village, each man singles out the steer that he prefers and drives it some little distance away from the herd. When a favourable spot is reached for the slaughter of the animal, he sends an arrow or a bullet into some vital spot and thus the chase is ended. He hastily dismounts, cuts the jugular vein in order to let the animal bleed, and then returns to the village, while the squaw skins and cuts up the meat. In some cases the braves help do this work, but more frequently the squaws are compelled to do it alone.

Two Bears was somewhat above the average Sioux, and, when he had shot his steer, he dismounted and, taking his sharp hunting-knife, skinned the beast and then disembowelled it, loaded one half of the meat on his little pony, and led the animal to his tipi. There he unloaded, and returning to the plain brought the other portion. The weight was so great that the animal staggered under the load, and when relieved evidently seemed greatly pleased, for he gave a loud whinny, shook his dark brown mane, flourished his heels, and started on a trot to join those of his companions who were grazing on the undulating plain near by. Omaha helped him cut the meat into long strips and hang it upon the little frame-work outside the wigwam. There the sun would dry and harden it so that it could be used later in the

week. This habit of drying beef the Indians have practiced since time immemorial, and their buffalo meat is all prepared in this manner.

Until recent years the Indians were not furnished with stores in the summer because they could hunt elk, buffalo, deer, etc., and thus gain sufficient for their wants. But since the year 1879 the buffalo have become very scarce, and in the last three years have been entirely exterminated, so that now rations are issued the year round. But at the time of which we are writing, the beef just furnished was the last which the Indians would get until the next winter. Hence the precaution of Two Bears and his wife in drying and preserving this for future use in case their annual buffalo hunt should not terminate as successfully as they hoped.

Although expecting their daughter, they did not pause in the preparation of the food. The village was situated upon a little eminence flanked by a small clear brook which had its rise in the Black Hills ten miles distant, and was not as muddy as most of the streams in Western Dakota. From the eminence there was a view of the country for several miles in each direction. Wanneta was expected to come from the nearest railway station on horse-back, escorted by her brother, John Runner. Both Two Bears and his wife kept a very sharp lookout for them, and were rewarded about half-past four o'clock by seeing a small cloud of dust rising far to the southward. Dropping their work by the time the horses were near enough for the riders to be discerned, the father and mother had run down across the creek bank and out

several hundred yards on the plain to meet them. The other Indians in the village also ran to the creek bank, and some of them across, and set up a great shout as the couple drew near. (The Indians among themselves are a very affectionate and jolly people. It is only in the presence of whites that they are reserved and stolid. It is a popular error that they never express emotion. A brave may laugh at tortures inflicted upon him by his enemies and he may deride those who are burning him at the stake, but in his wigwam with his family, he is a jolly, whole-souled person from whose lips flow humour, wit, and anecdotes. He has a bright word for every child in the tribe, and his face, instead of bearing a look of impenetrable stolidity, is often wreathed in smiles.)

Nearer and nearer approached the horses until they came within speaking distance. Then the father, throwing up his arms with beaming countenance and making gesture as if to thank the Great Spirit for bringing his child safe home again, called out in loud tones,— "Wanneta, Wanneta." His daughter called out in return, "Oh, my father, my mother," and springing from the pony's back rushed forward and embraced first her mother and then her father, then catching up her little sister pressed the child to her breast and kissed her brown face. The first greeting over, there came such brief questions as we are wont to ask one dearly beloved whose countenance we have not beheld for years. After these we think of more serious matters: so with these Indian people. The first greetings were short, but they were just as sincere from these children of the wilderness

as any from the more civilized dwellers in the great cities.

Wanneta was standing in a crowd of people on the bank of the stream, friends who had come to welcome her. There were young Indian girls with whom she had played and romped, and there were young Indian youths with whom she had enjoyed many a wild pony race across the plain. There was her aunt, her uncle, her cousin, there was her white-haired old grandfather, the medicine-man of the tribe. He stood waiting for her to run to greet him, and as she approached lifted his hands toward the blue sky above and asked for the blessing of the Great Spirit, Waukantauka, upon his grandchild.

What a change there was in Wanneta! She went away from the Indian village sun-burned, with the complexion of a dark prairie rose, with raven tresses, that had never been clipped or trimmed, and which, when she was mounted upon her pony, racing across the prairie, streamed backward in the breeze, or falling about her neck and shoulders formed a beautiful frame-work in which was shown to the best advantage her pretty face. She went away with a freshness and vivacity which is gained from nature alone, like some wild flower that had reared its shapely form upon the green sward of the prairie; she came back as that same flower which, when taken up and transplanted to some conservatory, loses part of that beauty which it had in its natural surroundings. The flower may have become whiter and more delicate, but it has lost its wild and characteristic freshness. So with Wanneta. She came back educated, and

robed in garments such as those who have not tasted the pleasures of the out-door life are wont to wear.

Two Bears led the way to the wigwam, which was a large structure about twenty-seven feet in height and fifteen feet in diameter. It was very neatly kept, and was more tastefully arranged in the interior than most of the tipis and wigwams in the village. He threw back the buffalo skin which hung across the entrance and bade his daughter enter. The mother and son followed, as did the medicine-man and a few friends of the family. All seated themselves in the tipi in a circle, and a conversation began which lasted well into the night. Omaha would occasionally leave her daughter's side to see that the meat in the kettle did not burn or to exchange compliments with some of her acquaintances and friends.

"Mother," said Wanneta, "I am so glad to be with you again. Although I have been away three years, I have not forgotten my friends, nor have I given up all my Indian ways. The school contains many girls from the agencies near here, and from the southwest, and while we studied in the white man's tongue, yet we always talked among ourselves in our native language. I have come back to do what good I can for you and try to persuade some of our young people in the tribe to go away to the white man's school, but I do not intend to leave and take the white man's road. They treated us very well there, and they did not make us work as hard as you think. I learned a great many new things, and I can be very useful to you, dear mother, in taking care of the household."

"My child," said her father, "we have too much confidence in our children to think they would do wrong. You are a Sioux girl, you are a daughter of a brave father who will do anything for you; we are glad that you have been to school, we are glad that you have learned much, and we want you to teach us something of what you have learned, and to aid your mother in her work."

"My grandchild," said the medicine-man, Wa-da-ha, "you have spoken wise words to us, and I have listened to them patiently. We do not want you to become one of us unless your heart prompts you to do so. No Sioux maiden shall be compelled to do what she does not like. Decide thyself, oh my child, Wanneta. Remember the Indian family to which you belong, a family that has become stronger in late years instead of weaker, a family which is a fair type of the Sioux nation. You are one of a people whose bravery and deeds of valour have been sung in countless songs by all the red men from the far North to the South, and even those pale faces who live in tall houses in the land toward the rising sun tremble when they read of the Sioux who do feel no fear and whose courage is so undaunted that many have been known to die by torture rather than utter a sound of complaint.

"You are free to come and go, you can wear your white woman's clothes or you can put on your frock of beaded deer skin, and with your old friend and companion of your childhood, your faithful pony, Brown Eyes, you can dash across the rolling prairie, smelling the sweet perfume of the wild flowers, with a stretch of blue

azure above and a green carpet below, as you used to do before you entered the white man's school."

Indians are very sentimental and emotional among themselves, and so Wanneta, when she heard these words from her friends intimating their hopes and desires, was much affected. She had looked forward for many days to her home-coming. She had enjoyed many privileges at the school and had learned a great deal, but her proud and free Indian spirit longed to get into the open air again. In nearly every case where Indians have sent their children away to school they have taken up their old mode of living on their return to the reservations with but few modifications. The writer has seen Indians enter the agency store to buy some sugar and coffee, perhaps from the store-keeper. Two whom I have in mind could talk English as well as their interpreter, yet they confined all their remarks to the Sioux tongue, and although conversation engaged in by those near by pertained to them personally, and they undoubtedly understood every word, yet they did not betray the least sign of intelligence, nor could you have told that they knew anything about the English language. So as Wanneta left the school and began her long journey homeward, every mile of the distance gone over on the cars rendered her more and more impatient to be with her people, and, indeed, such was the condition of her mind that when within sight of the station where she was to meet her brother she could scarcely restrain herself from giving a few screams of delight.

As the talk proceeded in the wigwam, a great struggle

was going on in her mind. Should she live as her parents did, or should she take the white man's road? It was a question too important to be decided on the impulse of the moment, and she thought it would be best to spend some time considering the matter.

"Father," said Wanneta, "you remember the stories that you used to tell me three years ago. Many happy evenings did we spend in this wigwam listening to them. Suppose that you, if you cannot think of one, call in Chief Gopher and ask him if he will not tell us a story of his early life to pass away the hours."

Two Bears went out in search of Gopher, and soon returned with him. Gopher was about fifty years of age, rather heavily set, and was the second chief of the village, Rain-in-the-face being the head chief. He was a renowned story-teller, and it was his delight to recount the adventures he had passed through, and the early history of the Sioux nation as he had heard it from the lips of his ancestors. When Two Bears returned with Gopher, a crowd of people anxious to hear the coming narrative entered the lodge or stood in the opening until the space was so filled that there was room for no more. Two Bears drew forth a large pipe made of red pipe-stone, or catlinite, and presented it filled with tobacco to Gopher, who stepped outside, and lighting it with a coal of fire, seated himself in the centre of the circle of his friends and began the narrative.

"Once, a young woman had been lost from a party who were crossing the plains on the way to the Black Hills to hunt buffalo. There was nothing heard of her

for nearly a year, and then another party who were going over the same trail for the same purpose discovered her whereabouts. A young man, who had been riding some little distance from the main body, came into camp in hot haste, saying that he had found the woman who had been lost, but that he could not get near her or induce her to come to camp. Some of her relatives happened to be with the party, and they went in great haste to the place where the young man said the woman could be found. But they could not get near her for a long time, for she said they had a strong smell about them and that she did not want to go with them because of this odour, which was very offensive to her. She had lived, she said, with a pack of buffalo wolves, and the wolves had killed buffalo calves for her, and thus furnished her with food. She had a knife with which she cut up the calves which the wolves killed. The meat she had carried to a cleft in some rocks where she lived. She had great quantities of dried meat in this place, which she pounded with stones quite fine and ate raw. She had no way of building a fire, and therefore could not cook the meat. She was finally induced to go to camp, and after a short time said that she did not notice the smell any more, and at last consented to stay with the people. She lived to be an old woman, and her name is 'I-guga-o-ti-win, The-woman-who-lives-in-the-cleft.'

"I have been a great hunter in my time, and I have killed many buffaloes, and can remember when the whole country was black with the herds that roamed over the plains. Soon after my marriage, while travelling from

one place to another in search of buffalo, when the meat of my family was about all gone, and when we were on the point of starvation, we suddenly came upon a small herd. I shot a bull many times with arrows; but being very weak from lack of food, I was not strong enough to send the shafts into some vital part, and only succeeded in badly wounding the beast. The bull became so mad, and charged so viciously that I could not get near enough to give him the fatal shot, so I left him and started after the rest of the herd. After I had travelled some little distance, I heard a loud bellow, and, looking back, saw him coming after us. He was charging about, throwing the dirt and sod high in the air, and bellowing in rage. My wife and children in terror left the ponies, and climbed into some trees which were luckily near at hand. I stationed myself upon a steep bank, where I could with safety watch his approach. By the arrows that were sticking in the creature and from the blood that was spurting from his nose, I saw that it was the same one I had tried to kill a few moments before. He was almost out of arrow's reach, but I resolved to try one final shot, and calling to my wife and children to witness, I bent my bow with all the strength that remained, and sent an arrow high in the air, curving in his direction. It was a chance shot, and with great interest we watched the arrow in its flight. It went out of sight, and just as we were about giving up hope, we saw the buffalo crouch nearly to the ground and shake himself, and start off on a quick trot. After going a few hundred yards he stopped, stood a moment, staggered backward, and fell. We rode

over to where he had fallen, and found him quite dead, with an arrow sticking in his back, as if shot from the clouds. On cutting the animal open, we found his belly and entrails filled with foam and froth.

"I know my hearers would like to learn of the doings of one of the bravest young men that ever drew breath in our entire Sioux Nation. What he did happened many years ago, and although he gave up his life in his great effort, yet he accomplished more than many who say 'I am brave.' Our tribe was at war with the Crows, and the wise men and our chief had called a council to know what we should do, for the Crows were marching against us, so our runners reported, with a large force of armed warriors. The council-drum sounded loud throughout the village, and all the braves and old men gathered at our large tipi, wherein we held our meetings, to ascertain what was best to be done. I was then a young man, full of fire and as brave as any in the tribe. As we sat and smoked our pipes and debated, two runners entered, out of breath, for they had come in hot haste for many miles, and shouted out: 'The Crows are coming with seven hundred picked braves; they are only a few hours' distant.' They were coming to avenge the death of one of their young men, who had been killed by one of our young men, Swift Foot by name, in a quarrel. The runners said that the life of Swift Foot was demanded, or the whole village would be destroyed and the women and children carried away into captivity. We had not time to send to the other tribes for assistance, and as there were but eighty-five warriors in our village, we

were in the greatest distress to know what to do. We should all be killed without doubt. The Crows would soon be upon us, and we must do something, or die like cowards. Just as our chief was about to order the men to arms, the young man Swift Foot entered, and with downcast head chaunted a few lines: 'I have brought this trouble upon you; I am not afraid to die; I am a brave man; I will go out and give myself up. They may burn me at the stake, but I will not shrink. I will die as a man. Farewell, my friends. Swift Foot goes to sing his death song.' Before the council could act, approve or disapprove, Swift Foot, springing out of the entrance, sounded his war-whoop, and dashed off in the direction of the enemy. The Crows did not attack the village, and, as we learned afterward, they seized the young man, carried him back with them, and, in accordance with the wishes expressed in his taunts, burned him at the stake. But he died as should a brave and noble Sioux; there was not one word passed his lips other than of scorn for his captors. I do not know all that he said, but his death song as sung at the stake was told me by a woman of our tribe who was captive there at the time, and who heard him. It was full of defiance, and was a credit to our people. As nearly as I can remember, it ran as follows:—

"'I fall, but my body shall lie,
A name for the gallant to tell,
The gods shall repeat it on high,
And young men grow brave at the sound.'*

* This death song, taken from Schoolcraft's "North American Indians," is as he heard it upon the Upper Missouri. It is characteristic of the Sioux and Chippewas.

"Four days afterward one thousand Sioux attacked the Crows, who were eleven hundred strong, and defeated them, taking eighty-one scalps. Thus was the death of our brave Swift Foot avenged. I took four of those scalps myself."

With this Gopher arose, and, handing the pipe back to Two Bears, stalked out of the wigwam. Gopher was never known to tell more than one story at one sitting, and this was a signal that the evening's entertainment was over. The other Indians went to their respective tipis, and thus the family of Two Bears was left alone.

It was now growing late, and after eating a hearty meal out of the kettle—Indians eat whenever hungry—each one rolled himself in a large buffalo robe and dropped asleep. The owls hooted from the neighbouring cottonwoods, the wolves howled on the prairie, and the Indians, accustomed to this lullaby of nature, slept on without fear of molestation.

CHAPTER II.

SCENES ABOUT THE VILLAGE.

The Buffalo Dance.—Wanneta meets Strong Heart.

THE next morning, when the Indians were up and about their usual duties, two runners came into the camp from the upper Sioux reservation, eighty miles away, and announced that this lower reservation was invited to join them in a great buffalo hunt. This was to eclipse anything the Indians had ever done of its kind, and therefore preparations ought to begin at once. The hunt was to start at the new moon, or about ten days from the time the news was brought.

A council was summoned, and the runners were instructed to return to their people and say that the invitation was accepted, and that on the first day of the new moon the entire village would move to the upper reservation, and from there the start should be made. Whenever there is to be a big buffalo hunt, the Indians usually precede it by two or three nights of dancing, in order, as they suppose, to prepare themselves for it. It was known, therefore, among those present that a dance would be held that night, in which both men and women would participate. In the centre of the village there was a large square floor of hard-baked earth, several hundred feet in extent, and very smooth and level. This was used for

friendly contests in running, as a ball ground, and for gambling and general assembly purposes. The Indians are great gamblers. Their ball game is something like our baseball, but differs from it essentially in having some of the points of foot-ball. Lacrosse is taken from the Indian game of ball, and is but a modification of it. Many of the Indians hurried to the ground, smoothed rough places here and there, and did otherwise what they could to prepare for the dance. Fifty men brought large saplings and several hundred buffalo hides, and constructed a temporary lodge, twenty-five feet high and thirty by sixty feet on the ground. This was considered amply large enough for the dance.

It was now beginning to grow dusk. Every Indian who expected to take part entered his tipi and put in good order his very best suit. He then took down from one of the posts a mask made from the hide of the buffalo. This had the horns attached, while a strip of buffalo skin fell down the back, ending in a tail and two hoofs, one on each side. This mask he strapped on his head; the skin was fastened around his body by a heavy leather thong, and the hoofs hung down and struck upon the ground. When dancing they clashed together and made a clattering sound, such as bison make when galloping over hard earth.

While the people are getting ready for the dance, let us take a look around the Indian village. It stands upon a high bluff above a clear creek. It contains about six hundred warriors and about two thousand women, children, and old men. The lodges or tipis are almost entirely

made of buffalo hide, although a few of them are of saplings supporting a dome-shaped shell of clay. This shell is about a foot in thickness, and in cold weather makes the wigwam warmer than do the skins, but in warm weather a clay house seems damp, dark, and gloomy. The wigwams are not arranged with much regularity, although there is some order in the placing of three rows nearest the stream, which are about fifty or sixty feet apart. Two Bears' wigwam is about a hundred yards from that of the Chief Rain-in-the-face, while Chief Gopher, the story-teller, has his tipi not far from that of Two Bears.

Gopher is the richest Indian in the tribe, owning a hundred and ten ponies. His children have all married, and are settled in the upper end of the village. He lives alone with his aged wife. Rain-in-the-face, the leading chief at this time, is about thirty-two years old, tall, commanding, and of pleasing address, although at times very stern and relentless, and possesses a temper which, when fully aroused, sweeps and rages and turns him into a demon, as the fearful cyclone sweeping across the prairie turns a scene of beauty into a wilderness of desolation. Rain-in-the-face has a squaw, Wa-wa, and a son, Strong Heart. He has no other children.

So much for the surroundings of the village and its leading characters. There are many squaw men, whites who have married Indian women, and who live off the tribe, and a number of worthless persons. We find these in our civilized communities, as well as in the barbarians' home; it is a thing to be deplored, but one for which there is no remedy.

Evening has settled down, and the sun-light has faded. Dark forms can be seen here and there hurrying toward the dance-house, some in groups of three and four, talking and laughing, others singly and silently wending their way to the scene of the festivities.

There are a number of fires upon the open space. Their ruddy glow lights up the scene and gives a weird effect to the moving figures. The dance has not yet begun, nor have all the persons who shall take part arrived. The ground outside the house is being used by the small boys and girls of the tribe as a play-ground. You can see them running here and there with merry shouts and laughter, chasing a dog or tripping up a companion, just as our boys and girls do in our country towns on the evening of some political meeting or great gathering. Now and then a row of boys will form a circle about some fire and for a few moments carry out in pantomime the dance their fathers are to begin later. You see their merry faces, hear their glad shouts and vigorous stamping, as they circle about the blaze.

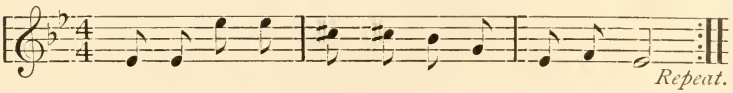
Presently the drummer takes his position near the door of the dance chamber. He strikes upon the tom-tom, and the boys and girls instantly cease their boisterous merriment, and in subdued tones and with stealthy tread approach the building. Some of the boldest enter, while the others lurk about the entrance or apply their eyes to crevices in the walls, and give themselves up to longings to be a grown man and dance.

As the drummer pounds upon the tom-tom, the dancers file into the structure until some sixty or seventy are

present. All do not dance at once, but from time to time those who are tired retire, and their places are taken by others. The head-dress of buffalo horns is very heavy, and a warrior cannot dance over two hours without great fatigue. Meanwhile the women join in the chaunt. Some few of them are selected to dance at intervals with the men. It is considered quite an honour for a woman to dance, and consequently the dusky belles of the plains prink and paint exactly as one of our society belles would to attend an Inauguration Ball or distinguished reception in Washington or New York.

The dancers have all entered and taken their positions. The musicians are seated by the drummer, and the orchestra, consisting of one drum and three flutes, is ready to strike up. At a given signal they begin. The men sing a dismal tune of some ten or twelve notes, repeated over and over. The women sing the same tune with a few variations. The whole makes a harmonious sound, although very monotonous to any ears but those of an Indian. The music given herewith is that used in the buffalo dance.

BUFFALO DANCE SONG.



Chief Rain-in-the-face joined in the dance, as did his son, Strong Heart. Gopher was too old to participate, but the entire family of Two Bears, except the youngest child, decked out in great extravagance of hair, feathers, and paint, took part in the ceremonies.

After half an hour had passed the women withdrew from the circle, and the men continued about the centre pole of the house, each in turn invoking the aid of the Good Spirit Waukantauka on the coming hunt.

Suddenly a new and pleasing feature presented itself. At a given signal ten of the most beautiful young women in the entire tribe, led by Wanneta, sprang into the centre of the house, and forming a line not far from the men, began a low chaunt. They were decked out most gorgeously, and looked really charming. There was no horrible buffalo mask about their shapely shoulders; they had come for a ceremonial such as is always given when a buffalo dance is in progress, known as the love dance. In this, young braves and maidens are at their best, and often become betrothed. It is an event looked forward to by all the young people. When the maidens entered, the married men who had been dancing withdrew, and the young men threw off the masks and appeared in feathers and paint, dressed with great care and taste. The column of young women advanced with a graceful motion, similar to a shuffle. The young men advanced on one foot hopping; then, when the lines were about ten feet apart, all turned suddenly and danced backward to opposite sides of the house. The lines delayed a moment, then the squaws came to the assistance of the orchestra, and a new tune, much more lively, was struck up, and the young men began the love chaunt. A rude translation of some of the lines may be of interest:

Young Man: "My dear, will you take my hand and

dance across the floor? I am strong and brave; none can treat you so well."

Young Woman: "Who are you thus to speak? I will not take your hand."

Young Man: "A trial will assure you that I am not so bad. I think you will prefer me to other braves here."

Young Woman: "Since you are so bold, I will dance across this room once, if you are sure you prefer me to another."

So the conversation ran, very dull to us, but full of meaning to the Indian.

Wanneta had danced forward and back again several times. She saw no one she fancied; in fact, it was the first dance she had attended for three years, and she was somewhat bewildered. She remembered that Rain-in-the-face's son Strong Heart was a friend of hers before she went East, but supposed that he had forgotten all about her. She had not seen him since she returned, and could scarcely imagine how he looked.

When the second call came, and the time for each girl to be led across the floor to the other side, she noticed a large, broad-shouldered, finely-dressed young brave approaching her, his face full of expression and his eyes intently set upon her face. There was something familiar about the features; could it be Strong Heart? He was near; he asked to dance with her; she consented, and before she could realize where she was, they were across the room and responding to each other in chaunt.

"Do you not know me, Wanneta?"

"Yes; you are Strong Heart, the companion of my childhood."

"Have you forgotten your old friends?"

"No; how could I? I am the daughter of a Sioux, and as such I would feel ashamed to forget any one whom I had known and with whom I had played."

And so they talked and chaunted back and forth. The half hour allowed for this dance seemed but a few moments, and both were very sorry when it was over. The people looking on were struck with the beauty of Strong Heart and Wanneta, and many said: "How well they look; how they keep time; what a fine son our chief has!" or, "Two Bears ought to be proud of his daughter."

As the dance was concluding, Strong Heart said: "Wanneta, let us take a ride on our ponies in the morning. I want to talk with you. Would you not like to see the rocky glen where I gathered ferns for you when last we romped across the plain? There are some beautiful ones there now. Will you go?" And as she left him and rejoined her companions outside, she whispered "yes."

The bright faces vanished and in their place came a crowd of masked warriors shaking bows, spears, and guns, and calling on the Great Spirit for plenty of buffaloes. Around and around the post they circled, now bending low to the earth, now straightening up and delivering a piercing yell. The fire light, the shadows of the dancers, the doleful singing of the squaws and the drone of the orchestra make a combination of sight and sound which when once heard can never be forgotten.

Thus the dance went on all night long. As soon as one Indian became tired, another took his place, and as there were plenty of men in the village the ceremonies could have been continued for several days without difficulty. As soon as the sun was fairly above the eastern hills those who had taken part repaired to their tipis, where they were glad to pass nearly all of the day in sleeping and smoking.

Wanneta had stayed up no later than midnight in anticipation of what was coming, so when Strong Heart rode toward the tipi on his fleet pony, she was ready to accompany him.

Her father had brought in her pony, Brown Eyes, and when her escort was drawing near, she leaped nimbly upon the animal's bare back and with a series of short yells galloped out to meet the chief's son. Nearly all Indians ride bareback.

Strong Heart advanced to meet her with a smile upon his face, and as soon as he was beside her, with a common impulse both lashed their ponies into a mad run and raced away across the rolling prairie toward the north.

CHAPTER III.

THE DAY AT THE CLIFFS.

THERE are portions of Dakota, in fact there are large stretches of country, where the soil is so very poor that little grows. Such sections are known as the Bad Lands. There are some spots in these Bad Lands which are, as it were, slight oases in the desert, places where a few shrubs and ferns flourish. There are many valuable minerals throughout the region, and as the great gulches and cliffs have been formed by volcanic action, the geology of the section is exceedingly interesting. There are, too, many fossil remains in the organic rocks throughout this section, and surveyors in the interest of science have been known to travel from the far East in order to visit and study the freaks of nature as here exhibited in awful grandeur.

These Bad Lands begin quite suddenly, the southern portion being the most picturesque. Small streams break through here and there, and for some twenty-eight or thirty miles the gulches are filled with wild flowers and ferns, although no trees grow, and the effect is very beautiful. Imagine some vine trailing its green length up the side of a tall pillar-shaped rock, or a spray of ferns or pink flowers sprouting out from the crevices in a ledge many feet from the ground. These beautiful things stand out against the background of the dark, frowning

volcanic rocks, and seem all the more lovely because of their dismal surroundings.

It was to one of these places that Strong Heart and Wanneta were bound. Of course their thoughts were upon matters far removed from geology and kindred subjects.

The horses had proceeded but a short distance before they settled down into a steady gait, and so the ground was passed over as if on the wings of the wind. When about five miles from the village, far ahead toward the north could be seen looming up and clearly outlined against the azure sky, the first rocks and ledges of the Bad Lands. In the clear dry air of the north-west, distances are very deceptive, and a mountain or hill may look not more than three miles away, when in reality it is ten or fifteen.

Wanneta and Strong Heart were not deceived by this, for they were accustomed to the dry atmosphere. They rode on, chatting pleasantly together, and not expecting to reach the glen for at least an hour.

"How much more enjoyable," said Wanneta, "is this life than that which I led at the school in the East! Here I have no dismal walls to surround me, no one to dictate what I shall do, none of the rules which bind my free spirit and make me feel as did that poor red bird which I once saw in a cage, vainly beating its wings against the bars in a mad but hopeless effort to escape. Never again will I leave my people; I am a Sioux girl, not a pale face; I will live as such."

Strong Heart was not given to sentiment as much as his fair companion, but he gave a tremendous grunt of

approval, which, although it might lack in elegance, still made up for the deficiency by coming from his heart and being exceedingly emphatic. Indian-like, he passed over her remarks without any comment, and, changing the subject hastily, he said:

"What did you think of the dance last night?"

"Oh, I liked it very well," she replied; "I had not been at a dance for three years, as, of course, they have nothing at the white man's school except one totally different from ours. I saw one or two of these, and did not think much of them. I had a very good time, but as you were the only young man that I remembered or cared to dance with, it would have been rather tedious had you not been there."

"Many of our people thought we looked very well upon the floor," said Strong Heart; "they said that you did just as well as if you had been at our dances once a week for years, instead of having been away all the time."

They rode on in silence for a while, and then conversation began again, Strong Heart asking Wanneta what the white man's idea of the Indian was. He had seen many white men on the reservation and on his travels, but he had never been to a large city, and he did not know how many there were of them and what was their mode of life.

"You would be surprised," said Wanneta, "to know the ignorance of most whites about our customs and habits. Many whom I saw in their country would pass me upon the street and turn around and look at me as if I were some wild animal. You know, Strong Heart, that were a white man to go through our village we would

talk among ourselves and wonder who he was and what he wanted, but unless he asked questions or showed interest, no one would crowd about him and be so rude as to stare at him, ask him impertinent questions and laugh aloud at his replies; yet they call him a civilized being, and they look upon us as savages. Another thing I could not understand was how their men could cheat and defraud each other, saying with open face 'this dress or horse which I have for sale is the finest to be bought in the city, and I am selling it at less than I paid for it, when they know that which they offer has not cost them half what they sell it for, that it is a very poor dress or horse, as the case may be, and worth very little. Were one of our tribe to defraud his neighbour in such a bold-faced manner, he would be driven out of the village."

"Ugh, ugh," grunted the young man.

"But they have some very beautiful writings and sayings about our nation and about other Indian nations in the West, some of which I read or our teacher read to us, and which we committed to memory. There was a great man named Longfellow, who wrote some beautiful poetry about the Indians, which, while in some particulars untrue, is still so beautiful that I wish you could hear it."

"Say some of it for me, Wanneta," said Strong Heart, "I should like to hear what the great story-teller of the white men has to say about us. It would interest me."

Wanneta continued,—"He wrote a big book full of these stories, which of course when I translate to our people, as I brought one of the books with me, I cannot

make rhyme as he did, for he wrote it in his own language. But I can make it very interesting. To-night, if the people will come to the lodge, I will read them what the great story-teller has to say."

The young man gave another grunt, and she continued:—"He writes a beautiful story about our red pipestone, and as I remember some of it, I will say it for you." Then Wanneta began to recite, translating into the Sioux tongue, Longfellow's celebrated "Peace Pipe," which begins:—

> "On the mountains of the prairie,
> On the great red pipestone quarry,
> Gitchie Manitou, the mighty,
> He, the Master of Life, descending,
> Stood, and called the nations,
> Called the tribes of men together," etc.

Strong Heart thought it was very well done, and he expressed his approval, saying that his people would greatly rejoice to hear the poem recited, and he should tell all whom he saw to assemble at the large dance-house, where she would read it to them.

Wanneta hoped to get the Indians interested in some of these poems, because she thought it would do them great good. She had a very peculiar character herself, and while she wanted to be free, independent, and live with the tribe, she still wished to retain some of the white man's ways and to give the other Indians an idea of what the white men said of their people.

They were now close to the Bad Lands, and the grass and flowers which had been growing so profusely under

foot had almost entirely disappeared. They traversed a distance of nearly a mile before reaching the base of the cliff along the bank of a small but muddy stream. To the right and left of this stream there was a stretch of reddish earth, with nothing green upon its surface. Where the water flowed and irrigated the soil within a short distance on each side, the vegetation flourished; but even the banks of the stream soon began to present a desolate appearance, and when the young Indians passed into the opening of the glen from which the stream issued, almost everything that had life had died out, save here and there large ferns and coloured flowers growing in crevices and openings.

"Let us get off here and walk, Wanneta," said Strong Heart. So they dismounted, and the young man made fast the halters of the horses to a good-sized stone.

Indian halters are of platted horse-hair and are twenty feet long, so that if the end be fastened, the animal has sufficient length of rope to graze.

An Indian never goes out alone without being armed, so Strong Heart had taken his Winchester with him and about thirty-five or forty cartridges. They had seen one or two deer grazing in the plain as they approached the Bad Lands, but as the young people were not on a hunting expedition, he had made no attempt to shoot them.

Walking up the gorge nearly a mile, Strong Heart gathered ferns here and there until Wanneta's hands were full. With the agility of his race he scaled almost precipitous places, plucking here a beautiful fern, there a

wild flower, and at her bidding came and went. As he would, perchance, slip and fall, or stumble, when making a supreme effort to gain her approval, she would laugh uproariously, and her loud yet musical voice echoed from side to side of the gorge until it died away in the distance. Thus the time passed pleasantly. About one o'clock they sat down on a ledge of rock, and, with their feet dangling, began to eat some little corn-cakes and dried beef which he had brought in a beaded bread-sack, such as braves generally carry when hunting. But suddenly something happened which drove all thought of pleasure out of their minds, and caused the ferns and flowers which Wanneta held in her hand to fall into the narrow defile below.

Just after Strong Heart had opened the bread-sack and had given the corn-cake to Wanneta, they heard voices far up the gulch echoed clearly toward them by the rocky walls. They knew instantly that the sound was made by the Crows, old enemies of the Sioux nation. Both were aware that, while there had been no hostilities for some time, the last depredations committed had been by the Sioux of their own village, so that, should they be seen, they could expect little mercy at their hands. Like his father, Strong Heart was kind and considerate to his friends, but revengeful and cruel to his enemies. No sooner had the sound reached him, than he caught Wanneta by the arm and pulled her back, while he glanced up and down the defile. He saw an opening in the rock about two hundred feet beyond them, nearly on a level with the ledge on which they had been seated. Running

hastily thither he looked in, and returned to Wanneta, saying, "Come quick; get in here. The Crows are coming. Keep perfectly still."

Hurrying to the opening, they found a space a trifle larger than their bodies, leading into a small, irregular room, such as is commonly known as a fissure. This had once an opening above and below, but, fortunately for our friends, a contraction in the rock, or some upheaval in past ages, had slipped a large slab across its top. This had broken, and a part of it falling into the crevice below, had wedged itself tightly. It formed an uneven floor, which had a dip or slope toward the west, which was hard to stand upon, but which afforded a safe retreat. There was no way for a missile to reach the interior, except through the opening in front.

"Wanneta, if they see us and fire, you must keep back in the corner, so that a shot cannot reach you. Help me fill part of the opening." There were not stones enough to make a barrier more than breast-high, but Strong Heart was in hopes that it would suffice as a protection.

It was nearly five minutes before the enemy, who were advancing through the gulch, had come near enough to be seen by those above. The feelings of fear in Wanneta's breast had passed away, and she now had considerable curiosity as to the movements of the Crows. Of course, the presence of the two in the cave was unknown, and they would, perhaps, have been passed unnoticed, but for the flowers and ferns which had accidentally dropped into their path. The mounted Crows were carefully picking their way in and out among the boulders. They

had passed the cave, which was about eighty feet above them, and would, in all probability, have gone on, not supposing that any Sioux were near at hand, when one of their number discovered the freshly-broken ferns and flowers lying in a little heap near the wall of the defile. As soon as he saw them he uttered a grunt of surprise, dismounted, picked them up and showed them to his companions, who immediately gathered about and looked up and down, this way and that way. They saw the cave entrance, but as it was partially filled with stones and its interior quite dark, they could not, of course, tell whether or not it was inhabited.

Five or six dismounted from their horses and started on a quick run ahead of their party. They soon came to a level stretch of nearly half a mile in extent, and saw the ponies tied at the other end of it. An Indian pony knows an enemy or a stranger, and gives an alarm on their approach, just as a farmer's watch-dog lets it be known when a person of a different community passes the farm house or a stranger enters its gate. So the two horses, hearing the patter of the Indians' feet, were on the alert, and recognizing, perhaps, that something unusual was taking place, pricked up their ears, snorted, and sprang back as far as the halters would allow them. When Strong Heart had made them fast he did not expect to be gone long, and so had tied them to a stone of about three hundred pounds weight. The animals struggled vainly to escape, while the Indians quickened their pace, in order to capture them before they could break away. Brown Eyes, Wanneta's pony, gave a great plunge, and

overturned the stone to which she was tied; the rope around the end of it slipped off, and thus freed her. The stone in falling tightened the knot in the halter of the other animal, so that, although it struggled frantically to escape, it was unable to join its fleeing companion, and fell an easy prey to the exultant Crows. Brown Eyes dashed down the rocky bed of the stream, and would have soon been out of danger; but, quick as thought, one of the Indians caught up his gun and sent a well-directed shot after the fleeing mare. Although this grazed her flank and wounded her slightly, drawing considerable blood, it proved a blessing rather than a curse, because it frightened the animal so that she redoubled her speed, dashed across the plain in furious haste, and traversed the twelve miles between the scene of the capture and the Sioux village in less than an hour.

The sight of Brown Eyes dashing into the village, covered with foam and blood, created great excitement, and it was not fifteen minutes before seventy mounted Sioux warriors, on their fleet ponies, with resounding whoops, were following up its trail to learn whether or not the son and daughter of two of their most prominent people were in trouble and needed assistance.

The Crows, meanwhile, led the captured horse back to their companions with exultant shouts. Those who had halted where the flowers were found had been looking all about, but could find no trace of trail or see any living being. Some moments were spent in consultation, and it was advised to go down the cañon to where the rocky ledge, up which our two friends had clambered, began

its ascent. The ledge was about five feet wide, and ran slantingly up the side of the cañon until eighty feet from the ground, then it was quite level in extent for nearly a hundred yards, the further end being in front of the cave in which Wanneta and Strong Heart were secreted. In other words, it was a sort of a road formed by nature, a freak which cannot be explained, but which is of frequent occurrence, and which, like the entire country embraced in the Bad Lands, is due to volcanic action.

Two of the warriors began the ascent at the lower end of the ledge. Intense excitement reigned inside of the cave as these two braves clambered upward. Strong Heart's eyes were flashing, his sinews stretched to their utmost tension, and his whole frame bore the aspect of stern defiance. He grasped his trusty Winchester, and made ready to fire upon the approach of the foremost Indian. Wanneta stood in the corner and whispered to him some suggestions, but as a warrior cares little for the advice of a woman when there is a fight on hand, he silenced her with, "Be still, Wanneta."

He decided upon a very strange and bold course, and bidding her stand with six or seven cartridges ready to throw into the magazine of the gun, he stuck his head and shoulders out of the aperture, and called out in the Crow tongue, "Stand back. I will shoot the first man that comes upon the ledge. We desire peace. You are on our land, where you have no right. Our nations have not had war for many moons. Stand back, I say. If you advance, or shoot, I will open fire."

The Crows debated a few moments among themselves,

then one of their head warriors stepped forward, and, throwing back his head, called out in the Crow tongue, "Come down and surrender. We will not harm you; we wish to exchange you for two Crow prisoners in your camp. Come down, or I will order my young men to shoot."

Strong Heart turned to his companion, and said, "Shall we surrender, Wanneta?"

She drew herself up, and proudly answered, "No. Surrender means probably death for you and worse than death for me. No; there are only thirty of them. Make them keep off."

Cautiously screening his head and shoulders behind one of the irregular-shaped rocks in the opening, Strong Heart called out, "We will not surrender. We will stay here. Call those two men off the ledge, or I will fire." Then, turning to Wanneta, he said, "I have only thirty-six cartridges. I must not waste the ammunition. Here, take my hunting-knife."

He drew a keen, bright blade, fitted into a handle made out of a deer's front foot, from his sheath, and placing it in her hand, said, "Wanneta, hide this in your dress. If they capture or kill me, advance to the head warrior as if to shake hands, and say, 'how,' run the knife through him, and then plunge it into your own heart." She took it with a slight shudder, half afraid, but a few moments afterward grasped it with a firm hold, and stood ready to carry out her friend's instructions.

The two Crows on the cleft stood irresolute for a few moments, then turning, ran back to their companions.

The band withdrew up the cañon, secreted their ponies in a sheltered spot, and advanced on foot to the attack. They were armed with muzzle-loaders, and bows and arrows, being evidently just coming in from a hunting excursion. There were thirty of them, and there was not one Winchester in the entire band, so Strong Heart stood a fair chance if he could make his shots count, and, at the same time, keep himself well secreted. It had taken the Crows some time to go down the gulch to the horses and return, so that, with the time taken for the parley, nearly three-fourths of an hour had passed by. Strong Heart and Wanneta had heard the Indians say that one of the horses had escaped, wounded. This greatly gratified them, for they knew that it would reach camp, be seen by their friends, and that a party would be sent for their rescue. The Indians talked quite loudly, when describing the escape of this horse, as it was not known to them that the Sioux were secreted until too late to keep this from their knowledge. The Crows, too, were well aware how near the Sioux village they were, and they would not dare to remain very long for fear of the approach of their enemies.

They returned after hiding their horses, and ran up and down the cañon, secreting themselves behind rocks, or standing where they thought the bullets of the enemy would not reach them. Strong Heart, knowing well their superior numbers, reserved his fire as long as possible, and it was not until several volleys of arrows had whizzed through the entrance, or splintered themselves against the rocky walls on each side, that he fired his first

shot. He lay down on the bottom of the cave and fired through a little opening, scarcely three by four inches, as it was too dangerous to shoot standing, the rocks in the opening being but breast-high. Wanneta crouched in the corner at his side, for had she remained at the rear of the cave a glancing shot might have injured her. The arrows and bullets that entered through the opening flattened themselves against the wall behind, doing no damage. Strong Heart wished to keep the Crows from ascending, because they would then have a better command of his stronghold. If they shot from the creek-bed upward their missiles passed through the opening against the ceiling and glanced to the rear wall, where they fell harmlessly. Hence the importance of keeping the enemy from reaching a height equal to their own.

Crack, crack, came two loud, deafening shots, from the cave, at two reckless Crows who had run from cover toward the ponies, the firing having made some of them unmanageable. The shots were excellent ones. One warrior was killed outright, and the other had his arm broken at the elbow. Strong Heart hastily slipped two new cartridges into the places of those discharged, it being very important in a fight like this, against great odds, to keep the magazine of the gun filled. Two more shots disabled another warrior. Then four Crows, armed with bows and arrows, came on a dead run with loud "hi-hi-hi's," up the rocks, in order to secure a position that would command the cave.

Strong Heart had to spring to his feet. He delivered two shots, about three seconds apart, which tumbled two

of the braves into the gulch below; the other two losing heart, turned and dashed back to their companions, one of them being shot through the back of the head as he ran. As Strong Heart dropped to the floor several arrows and bullets passed close to his head, one of them making a scalp wound about three inches in length, but not stunning him. The Crows became convinced that he had plenty of ammunition, and a superior gun. So they ran with the speed of the wind back to their ponies, and held a consultation. The sudden death and disabling of six of their number considerably disheartened them, and from their loud words and "ki-ky-ing," the companions in the cliff thought that many were counselling a retreat. Nearly half an hour passed in the debate, and just as our friends were hoping that they were to be left alone, the remaining warriors, with loud yells, charged down the creek, grasped the bodies of their dead and wounded, and rushed back to shelter. Strong Heart meanwhile sent two shots, which, at this short distance, with a steady hand, could not fail to do damage. One man was shot through the lungs, and another one had his right hip broken. The Crows did not remain in hiding long, but soon came with a wild rush down the cañon, stripped nearly naked, with all the knives they could command in their hands, and one or two tomahawks and rifles, evidently designing to storm the place. As they swept by they scattered out, then came together again at the beginning of the terrace or ledge, and charged up in a body. As soon as they were in full view, Strong Heart, knowing that this was their last charge, resolved to take

the risk of being shot. He screened himself as well as he could, and resting his rifle across the stones, poured twelve of the sixteen shots in the magazine of the gun into the advancing crowd. Those in front staggered back, and those behind tried to push forward. There was a pause for an instant. Taking advantage of this, Strong Heart slipped in five new cartridges, and opened another rapid and destructive fire of eight shots upon the enemy. This was too much for them, for with half their number dead and dying they turned around with loud yelps and ran back to the horses.

During the last charge, Wanneta's heart failed her, and she was groaning and moaning in her corner of the cave, expecting every instant to see Strong Heart stagger back and fall.

As soon as the remaining Crows fled, Strong Heart placed his last cartridges in the gun, and saw that he had but seven shots left. He looked out cautiously through the hole, and counted seven dead and four wounded men upon the ledge. Two of them seemed but little hurt, and had rested themselves upon their elbows.

As the clatter of the ponies going up the cañon gave a sense of security to the brave young Sioux, Wanneta could not help recognizing how great a man her friend was. Among our people a deed like his would not give one great renown, but among the Indians, who esteem bravery above everything, it is different. Strong Heart would now be the hero of the whole Sioux nation. His smile, his word of commendation, would be sought by all, and any who could would do him honour. His brave

Indian spirit exulted now that he had vanquished his foes, and, rifle in hand, he pushed down the barrier and leaped out on the ledge, threw back his head and uttered the long, Sioux war-whoop. As it echod and re-echoed through the rocky walls of the gorge, there came an answer from the distance of loud re-echoing war-whoops, mingled with the welcome sound of the clatter of horses' feet. The Sioux were coming, led by Rain-in-the-face. As Wanneta and Strong Heart heard this glad sound, the one answered it with the loudest yell that he had ever given, while the other laughed hysterically, alternating her mirth with sobs, when she thought of the danger passed, as she stood in the doorway ready to behold the glad sight. At this moment, just as the horsemen came in sight, one of the wounded Crows, maddened by the sound, drew himself up to a sitting posture, presented his piece and fired, the ball taking effect through Strong Heart's left shoulder, breaking the collar-bone and piercing the shoulder-blade. The instant that the savage fired he fell back among his dying companions, weak from the loss of blood.

Strong Heart dropped fainting from the shot, and Wanneta, with mingling emotions of pity for him and scorn for his slayer, grasped his rifle, cocked it, and would have fired upon the two remaining Crows had they made a motion, but as their guns were empty, she left them to meet their fate at the hands of the coming Sioux, and bent over her fallen friend. She quickly tore off part of her dress, staunched the flowing blood, and called out loudly to Rain-in-the-face, who was a few

hundred yards distant, to hasten. She lifted the head of poor Strong Heart into her lap, and, holding him as gently as she could, called his name again and again. Her poor heart was well-nigh broken, for she thought him dead. The tears streamed down her cheeks as she remembered his brave defense of her and the noble spirit which he had shown. The horsemen were near at hand, and raising her head, still holding Strong Heart, while the blood flowed from under the bandage across her deer-skin dress, colouring it crimson, she called, "Come quickly; bring water. Strong Heart is dying."

Two Bears and Rain-in-the-face dashed into the creek, filled the little bread-sacks that they carried with water, wet their blankets, and hastened up the ledge to where Wanneta was sitting. The other Indians took charge of the bodies of the wounded and dying, went through their usual horrible yells, and were instituting a hasty scalp-dance, when Rain-in-the-face called to them to desist and come near.

The chiefs had tenderly bound up Strong Heart, had brought him to his senses by dashing water in his face, and, while praising his noble bravery and telling him to be strong and of big heart, they carried him tenderly down into the creek-bed.

Fifty of the warriors followed the trail of the Crows, while the others scalped the bodies of the slain and rode on ahead to take the news to the village. The Indians took turns in carrying the wounded man on a sort of rude litter made from their blankets, one having

hold of each corner. Their progress was necessarily slow, but they could not place the brave upon a horse, as the pain of the wound was so extreme. As it was, they made good headway, and, shortly after dark that night, entered the village, where a scene of great excitement awaited them.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SCALP-DANCE. — WANNETA GOES TO SEE STRONG HEART.

STRONG HEART was now the most famous man in the Sioux nation, and although he lay ill and very faint in his father's lodge, his name was on every lip, his exploits were being recited at every fireside. The young men of the tribe would have given all they possessed to have been with him in his bold fight. Seldom in the annals of the Sioux nation had such a slaughter taken place, nor was there any record of one man having kept at bay thirty Crow warriors. Strong Heart did not receive all the glory; many came to Two Bears' lodge to see Wanneta, who had shared with him the perils of the fight, and to offer her their congratulations on her escape from capture.

It had been the custom for many years in the Sioux nation to hold a scalp-dance in the large council-house, whenever any particularly brave deed was done. As every one knew what had taken place that day, all were clamouring for the usual dance. Although Strong Heart was quite ill, yet his recovery was vouched for by one of the squaw men who knew a little about medicine, and who had set the collar-bone. So the chief gave his consent that the dance should take place that night.

About nine o'clock a crowd gathered inside, and in the

immediate vicinity of the large building where the buffalo dance had been held, a crowd which rivalled in numbers that large assembly. Those who were to take part were differently dressed from those who had taken part in the buffalo and the love dances. The idea prevalent that a great quantity of ornaments is worn during this dance is erroneous; in a scalp-dance there is a lack of costume instead of a great profusion of finery. None but men were allowed to take part, and all the ornaments betokened something savage, something brave. For instance, two or three scalps are fastened to the pole in the centre of the lodge around which the dancers circle. The leaders carry each a scalp, but those who are not fortunate enough to have taken any, are allowed to take part also. A necklace of bears' teeth and claws is worn, bracelets made of panthers' teeth, and a scarf, beautifully beaded and fringed with rattlesnake rattles, is thrown over the shoulder. Each warrior sticks in his hair eagle plumes to designate the number of scalps he has taken. A warrior who is entitled to three eagle feathers is a big man in his tribe, and one who can wear fifteen or twenty, like Strong Heart, stands a very fair chance of being elected as next chief.

In the scalp-dance the women stood outside the door, a few of the favoured only being allowed to come in, and at certain intervals they joined in the wild song with the braves. Most of the music, however, was furnished by the Indian orchestra, consisting of several tom-toms and a number of flutes, the orchestra being larger than that on the last occasion.

The dancers were most hideously painted, and presented a most ferocious appearance. As they filed into the house, and forcing their way through the crowd, began to hop first on one foot, and then on the other, in a circle around the centre pole, they looked savage, indeed. As the dance went on, one would stamp upon the earth with all his might, and lifting himself erect, would brandish his scalping-knife, and give a war-whoop, in which he would be joined by all. The noise was simply deafening. In the centre of the circle, with his back against the pole supporting the rafters above, sat the chief medicine-man of the tribe. One half of his face was painted black, and the other white. He had before him several little sacks filled with herbs, rattles of snakes, claws of wild beasts, skulls of animals, and other odds and ends. These he shook ever and anon, sometimes over the heads of the dancers, as they passed him, and at other times toward the spirits supposed to be circling in the air near by. His hideous face, wrinkled with age and ghastly with paint, reflected the varying passions of his soul. Truly no demon from the infernal regions could have presented a more frightful aspect, or could have gone through more diabolical incantations.

Wanneta stood near the dancers and watched their evolutions for some time. At last, wearying of it all, she sought her father's tipi and, throwing herself upon the pile of skins, gave up her mind to meditation. The excitement of the day and the scenes through which she had passed would have unnerved any but an Indian girl. Wanneta's strong spirit scarcely knew what fear was,

and in the security of her father's wigwam, while thinking over what had taken place, she was highly gratified with the results, more especially because she was fond of adventure and because the day's doings had given her great notoriety in the tribe. Indians will do almost anything to gain the approval and applause of their own people. Wanneta thought of the noble Strong Heart lying wounded in his father's tipi, and deciding upon the impulse of the moment, ran out into the open air, passing many fires, and winding in and out among the tipis until she reached the lodge wherein he lay.

It was ten o'clock, and none of the Indians had as yet turned in. Wawa, Strong Heart's mother, was preparing a little broth for her son at the camp-fire back of the wigwam, so before entering the tipi, Wanneta spoke a few words with her. "How is he getting on?" she asked.

"Oh, he is feeling much better, although the wound those treacherous Crows gave him pains him severely. Would you like to go in and see him?"

Wawa entered the lodge, followed by Wanneta, and going over to one corner where Strong Heart was lying, said, "My son, here is Wanneta come to see you, and find out how you are."

Strong Heart turned his head toward the new-comer and made a slight motion with his right hand for her to sit down. She found a seat on the pile of soft furs on which he lay, and from the little light shed by the small fire in the centre of the tipi, could see that he was suffering sharply. His face she could not distinguish

plainly, but she judged from his heavy breathing that he was feverish. "The medicine-man has little that will do you good, Strong Heart. I have some medicine which I brought from the school, which my teacher gave me, that may be better. Shall I bring it to you?"

"Yes," murmured Strong Heart, "bring it here."

At this Wanneta ran quickly home, opened a little wooden box, took out one or two morphine powders and some quinine. Then running hastily back to Rain-in-the-face's lodge, she seated herself close beside Strong Heart, telling Wawa to bring a little water. Raising the sick man's head carefully, she gave him one of the morphine powders and then a drink of water. She sat patiently beside him for nearly an hour, holding his hand and watching the deep sleep into which he had fallen from the effects of the drug. She explained to Wawa the use of the powders and left them, so that should Strong Heart suffer during the night, he might be given another. The squaw man in the tribe, who knew a little of medicine as practiced by white physicians, had been there and had rudely set the broken collar-bone. The medicine-man had been there also with his rattles and drums, making the usual hideous noise to drive away the evil spirits. Wawa had great faith in the medicine-man, but neither her son nor his father placed any confidence in him, Strong Heart himself being especially wearied by the noise that the old fraud made, so he was very glad when he had gone. Whatever Wanneta might think of the Sioux people, she had learned enough at school to lead her to believe her grandfather a fraud as a physician,

although in other ways he might be very agreeable. She resolved to see him and find out if he would not give up the care of Strong Heart to her and the squaw man, Richards. It would not be worth while to make known this idea to her parents, as they would not approve of it, neither would it be best to tell any one save Rain-in-the-face himself. Therefore she decided that as soon as her grandfather should be up in the morning—for he would sleep late on account of his efforts at the scalp-dance—she would see him and extort, if possible, a promise from him.

Having decided on this, she gave herself up to thoughts about Strong Heart himself for a few moments, and then, with a slight parting pressure upon his hand, returned to her father's tipi.

Wanneta slept beside her little sister until late the next morning. Her father and brother had been attending the scalp-dance, and did not return to the lodge until broad daylight, so that when they arose, about noon, Wanneta had been up for some time, and was on her way to the tipi of her grandfather.

As is the custom in Indian tribes, the medicine-man always lives on the outskirts of the village. His lodge is looked on with some superstition by the other Indians, as there are in it objects which seem to them to be more or less akin to the supernatural. Although she had been taught to pay no attention to such things, and to regard them without fear, it was with some hesitation that Wanneta entered the lodge. Her grandfather, not imagining her mission, received her very cordially, bade her be seated, and asked her what news she brought.

"I have come," said the girl, "to ask a favour."

"Wa-da-ha would grant a favour to his granddaughter; he well knows that she would ask nothing foolish, and her brave spirit, as shown by what she did yesterday, entitles her to many favours." Pleased with the words, Wanneta became quite bold, and broached the object of her coming without further delay.

"I want to give Strong Heart the white man's medicine, of which I have a supply, which was given me in the East. It will do him good—make him strong; it will do more for him than all the noise which you make about his bedside."

"My child," said Wa-da-ha, "it is a good plan to give him good medicine, but it is not best for the great medicine-man not to see him, as there are many evil spirits hovering about which I must drive away."

Wanneta's heart sank when she heard these words, but she did not give up, and said, "Give him to me, grandfather. I will take as good care of him as you could, and I am sure he will get along better under my care. Please do this, oh, great medicine-man, and I will do anything for you that you may wish."

Wa-da-ha thought a moment before replying. "My child, if I do not cure the chief's son they will say my medicine is not as good as yours; they will laugh, and say the great medicine-man has failed. No, my child; I cannot give him up to you."

"Oh, this you must do," cried Wanneta. "I will give him good medicine, and, if you will only say that I can take care of him, I will tell the people that it is your

medicine that is doing him so much good. You shall have all the credit and the honour of making him well, the son of great Rain-in-the-face."

This put a new phase on the matter, and the old man knew well the potency of the white man's medicine, and in his secret heart was compelled to acknowledge it. He therefore reasoned thus with himself: "If I accept, I get all the credit of this great healing, and many in the tribe will make presents to me to conjure their enemies and cure their sick. Therefore, I shall accept, and it shall be known that great Wa-da-ha's medicine is so powerful that even dangerous gun-shot wounds can be cured with it."

Turning to Wanneta, he said, "My child, you bother me much, and you are very forward, for one so young, but it shall be as you wish. I give up Strong Heart to your care, with this condition. You must tell every one whom you meet, and who shall question you as to the condition of the patient, that great Wa-da-ha's medicine is doing a wonderful work, and that the patient is rapidly recovering." And, with that, the old rascal began muttering to himself, and strode back into a dark recess of his wigwam, where he rattled some bones and other trinkets probably to frighten the girl. Wanneta knew what he was about, and, with a merry laugh, sprang out of the lodge and ran rapidly home, full of delight at her success. As she tripped gayly past the lodges and exchanged salutations with those whom she met, she thought of her dear friend who was now under her tender care, and of whose recovery she felt certain. She entered the tipi of her parents, humming a little tune which she had learned

in the Eastern school, and as bright and happy as the birds in the bushes fringing the stream, who, with glad songs and cheerful chirpings, were flitting hither and thither in search of food.

Two Bears and his son, John Runner, turned out shortly after she came, partook of food prepared by Omaha, and then stretched themselves in the sun, lighted their pipes, and indulged in a quiet smoke. Scarcely had they settled themselves, when a number of young people came running up to the wigwam, and called loudly for Wanneta to come out.

"You promised us," they said, "to read from the great story-teller's book the words he wrote about the Indians. We should like to hear what he has to say," and they forthwith seated themselves. Wanneta was rather sorry that she had told any but Strong Heart of the book, because she could not expect to escape in less than two hours if she attempted to read, for as soon as they had heard one story or poem they would wish another. However, she got the book from its place in the little trunk, which was one of the relics she had brought from the East, and opened it to Hiawatha's fishing. This pleased the young men very much, but the girls did not show as much pleasure as when she began with Hiawatha's wooing, which interested them all equally. As the reading of this poem went on, they expressed their admiration in various ways, some by grunts, and now and then by laughter, when the author attributed to the Indians customs far removed from their every-day life. On the whole, the poem was considered a great success, and

when the book was closed, it was with great reluctance that the crowd dispersed to their homes. Wanneta did not go to see Strong Heart until night was coming on, when, fearing that the medicine-man might be carrying on his noisy incantations, she wended her way thither to see how he was getting on.

Entering the tipi, she found both Rain-in-the-face and Wawa present, also Richards, the squaw man. Richards had been feeling Strong Heart's pulse, and said that the morphine, in putting him to sleep, had greatly reduced the fever, and that he was in hopes that no serious inflammation would set in. If he could be kept perfectly still for some weeks, the collar-bone would knit together sufficiently to allow him free movement of the muscles of the upper arm, breast, and shoulder, but, if he should move about much, he might be maimed for life. Both his parents thought it most desirable to keep him quiet, and as the party who had pursued the fleeing Crows returned that afternoon with a number of scalps, and it was almost certain that the Sioux village would be attacked when the Crows could muster sufficient strength, Rain-in-the-face gave orders that, when the buffalo-hunt should come off, all the warriors with their families should not go with it. Some should stay and guard the village, otherwise the whole village must be moved with them. It was feasible to take the wounded man to the agency and leave a few braves as a guard while all the rest went on the hunt. The Crows would hardly dare attack the Sioux if stationed at the agency. Rain-in-the-face resolved to call a council in one or two days, and

leave the matter to the decision of the principal warriors in the tribe.

As soon as the squaw man, Richards, had taken his departure, Wanneta seated herself at the side of Strong Heart, and asked him a number of questions as to how he felt.

Rain-in-the-face went directly to the council-house, stopping on the way to arouse the drummer and take him with him. This functionary, upon his arrival at the building, sent out a prolonged call and began to beat the tom-tom. The men of the tribe, hearing the sound, flocked to the council-chamber to ascertain the cause of the summons. When a goodly number had silently stalked within and taken their seats in order of rank, the chief gravely lit his large catlinite pipe, and blowing a number of whiffs upward, passed it to the sub-chief, Gopher, to be sent around the circle while he made his speech.

"Brothers," said he, "I have called you together to take measures against the probable attack of the Crows upon us. We struck them a fearful blow yesterday, and they will seek vengeance. I want twelve of you to stand guard to-night over the village, at various points, and all of you to place your guns and ammunition in readiness, so that you cannot be surprised. The buffalo-hunt will take place in eight days, and I think it best for my son to be left at the agency buildings, with fifteen or twenty young men to guard him. I know you all want to go on the hunt, but I shall ask twenty of you to volunteer to act as his guard until he recovers sufficiently to follow us on the hunt. Who will remain?"

Thirty young men at once offered themselves as Strong Heart's guard, twenty of whom the chief accepted. He then told the braves assembled to be ready to start for the upper Sioux reservation eight days from the next, and, having given these directions, he dismissed the council. The news quickly spread throughout the village, every one expressing himself as entirely satisfied with the arrangements.

Indians are usually two months on their annual buffalo-hunt. They take everything with them when they go on an excursion of this kind. It must be understood that in setting dates, Sunday is counted the same as a week-day.

John Runner and several other young men were commissioned to visit the agency, inform the agent of the decision of the tribe, and get his permission to erect tipis just back of the government buildings, for the accommodation of Strong Heart and his guard. Rain-in-the-face was to accompany the main body on the hunt, and Wawa would stay to take care of her son, assisted by Wanneta.

As Wanneta sat in the wigwam talking with Strong Heart, the news was brought to them of the decision of the council, and also that the medicine-man was coming. Both Strong Heart and Wanneta had hoped that they would see no more of this individual, but they were to be disappointed. Wa-da-ha had heard it noised about the village that the young girl's medicine was stronger than his own, and that the probable recovery of the chief's son was due to the effects of the drug she had administered, so the old rascal bent his steps in the direction of the tipi in somewhat of a rage. As Wanneta and Strong Heart

talked, they could hear him approaching, chaunting a weird song, and rattling his necklace and chain of odds and ends. In a few words Wanneta told her friend what had taken place that morning in the lodge of her grandfather, and asked his advice.

Among our people it would be considered very improper for a young girl to take care of a wounded man when his parents were at hand to do this, but Indian custom considers this entirely proper. The way the Indians live, separated from each other by a simple door of thin hide, permits many things which with us would be considered impossible. Therefore, when a warrior is injured or in distress, there is not a woman in the entire tribe who will not do all in her power to assist him to recovery. Whether such a woman be attached to him or have not the slightest affection for him, makes no difference. Her Indian nature prompts her to do this, and should any member of the tribe let another suffer unheeded, she would be severely censured, and, perhaps, driven out of the nation.

"You did well," said Strong Heart; "your medicine is good, and I have much faith in it. I shall tell old Wa-da-ha that his noise disturbs me greatly, and I do not want him here."

"No; do not do that," said Wanneta. "He is a great man in the tribe, and exerts a powerful influence; were you to tell him this he would be furious, call a council, and I should be denounced as instigating a revolution against a man supposed to be endowed with power from Waukantauka, the Great Spirit."

"Be still," whispered Strong Heart; "he comes."

With many gestures and much ado, the medicine-man entered the lodge. Approaching the bedside, he danced around several times in circles, shaking a rattling gourd above the patient, and calling upon Wakausica, the Evil Spirit, to leave and torture no more the spirit of brave Strong Heart.

Our friends listened a few moments, and then Wanneta, springing to her feet, grasped her grandfather by the arm, and excitedly cried out, "Be still; you promised to leave him to me. Why are you disturbing him? Cannot you see he does not want you here?"

"Child," said Wa-da-ha, "they say in the village that your medicine is greater than mine. I will not have it so. Go; leave him to me! You have not kept your promise."

"I have kept my promise," cried Wanneta; "I appeal to Strong Heart for proof. I have told them that your medicine is great. Do not drive me away. Let me stay; oh, let me stay."

Wawa came forward at this moment, and said, "Your medicine is great, oh Wa-da-ha, and I have said so to all who have been in the lodge to visit my son. We have given him the white man's medicine, and it has done him good."

This admission from the mother of the young man carried great weight, as she had always been a believer in the power of the medicine-man. But it did not satisfy him. He flew into a rage; he raved and stormed; he called all the evil spirits to visit the lodge; he declared that he

would never enter it again. His denunciation was terrible, and although it startled Wanneta and Strong Heart greatly, yet it did not shake their faith in the white man's medicine. Not so with Wawa; she was frightened nearly to death; she had always been taught to believe in the medicine-man, and his curse of her house completely unnerved her. Seating herself in the corner, she swayed her body from side to side and uttered low moans. She should not be in the least surprised, so she muttered, to have a death in her family before long.

After delivering his speech, Wa-da-ha walked nervously back and forth a few moments, and then deciding upon a fearful action, sprang forward, and, walking around Wanneta and Strong Heart, invoked upon their heads the wrath of the bad spirit, Wakausica. Having delivered himself of this last curse, he sprang out of the doorway and vanished in the falling darkness.

CHAPTER V.

TROUBLE WITH THE MEDICINE-MAN.

As Wa-da-ha left the lodge, Wanneta sprang from the ground, and, running over to Wawa, said: "Do not believe him; he is very angry because I have given your son good medicine. He had no reason to curse us as he did. Do not believe in him. Do not fear him, but trust in the white man's medicine. It is strong; it is powerful, and will work great good."

"Yes, mother," called out Strong Heart from his pile of skins; "Wa-da-ha is an old fool; he does not dare repeat what he said in our lodge before father, as he would have him dismissed from the tribe. He is jealous, and cannot act with reason as long as passion possesses his soul."

"Oh, my children," whined Wawa, "what shall we do? Our house has been cursed, and there may great trouble come upon us. What shall we do? oh, what shall we do?" and she rocked herself back and forth, moaning meanwhile. Wanneta saw that Strong Heart was getting excited, so she gave him one of the morphine powders to induce sleep and to quiet his restless brain and soothe his nervousness. Then, thinking she had stayed long enough, she arose and went to her father's tipi.

News flies very swiftly in an Indian camp, and it was

not many moments before every one in the entire tribe had heard the startling news that their great medicine-man had flown in a rage and given Wanneta, Strong Heart, and the wife of their head chief a terrible cursing. Nearly every one discussed the matter, and eagerly sought details of the affair. The majority of the Indians sided with the young people, as the deeds of valour of Strong Heart were still fresh in their minds, and they could not believe that he and Wanneta had done the medicine-man any injury.

As soon as Wa-da-ha reached his own tipi, he threw off the costume he wore, put on the most horrible one he possessed, and, painting his face in yellow and black stripes, rushed forward to the council-house. The medicine-man, as well as the chief, has a perfect right to call a council. Upon reaching the building, he was about to order the drummer to sound the assembly call, when a heavy hand was laid upon his shoulder, and Chief Rain-in-the-face, with flashing eye and heaving breast, sternly said, "Come here!" Wa-da-ha suffered himself to be led into the council-chamber, for he did not dare dispute the word of his chief. It was pitch-dark in the great room, the little fire having been allowed to die out.

"Wa-da-ha," said the chief, "you have cursed my family. If you give good reasons I will forgive you, as I think you spoke when your mind was consumed with fires. I never did you a wrong, nor has my son, nor my wife, nor Wanneta, your granddaughter. You are a conceited old fool, and your age and long stay in our tribe alone saves you from being kicked out on the prairie to

shift for yourself. Go now. Never enter the lodge of Rain-in-the-face until you have said you were wrong. If you ever utter aught against me or mine, or attempt to influence any of the tribe against their chief, I will bind you hand and foot and give you to the Crows." With this the chief thrust him out of the building, and leaving him to nurse his wrath, strode to his own wigwam, calling out to the Indians in the village as he passed their tipis to assemble at his lodge to hear a few words. About a hundred and fifty followed him, and he spoke briefly, telling them what had happened, and asking them to treat the medicine-man with their usual respect, but not to listen to any idle tales that he might carry.

Meanwhile, Wa-da-ha, who, by the way, like nearly all medicine-men, was, as the Sioux say, "a coiled snake," was rushing hither and thither, gnashing his teeth, and fairly foaming at the mouth at the prospect of being outdone by the chief. What should he do for revenge? If he did anything openly, his life would pay the forfeit. If he did anything secretly, he might be found out. As he thought the matter over, his wrath centred mainly on Wanneta, because it was she who had the credit of Strong Heart's recovery, and it was her medicine that had been administered. Yet she was his grandchild, and why should he do harm to one who was of his own kin?

"Bah!" he said, "I do not care; she has done me wrong, and she shall pay for it. How can I be revenged? The great Wa-da-ha shall use his most subtle ways, and have revenge many times over for his wrongs. I believe that girl is falling in love with that young man, Strong

Heart, and wants to be his squaw. I will see if I can wound her by prejudicing him against her. I have it! I will see Spotted Eagle, a handsome young brave who is greatly taken with Wanneta, and who asked me to commune with the spirits and thus affect her heart toward him. I will tell him how he can win her, and I will send him to play the flute before her lodge. I will then send word to Strong Heart that Wanneta has listened to Spotted Eagle's flute-playing, and given herself to him. Ah, ugh!" and the medicine-man grunted gleefully to himself and rubbed his hands in delight. His face, a few moments before contorted with passion, black and lowering like some awful thunder-cloud, was now even more hideous. With a snake-like glitter in his eyes, and a ghoulish expression upon his face, he seemed ready and willing to tear the very heart out of one whom he wished to injure.

The hunter does not fear the lion or the tiger, either of which will face him in the path with undaunted courage, half as much as he does the poisonous cobra, which, lurking secreted in the grass near the path, strikes at a moment when he expects no danger and then escapes by crawling. Wanneta and Strong Heart had more cause of fear from this snake in human flesh than they had the day they were beset by the thirty Crows.

With mutterings and ravings, the medicine-man made his way around the village, in order that he might not be observed, to the wigwam where Spotted Eagle lived.

Spotted Eagle was a very handsome young man, and, although somewhat wild and reckless, bore a fair reputa-

tion. He was handsomer than Strong Heart, but in point of personal bravery and integrity he was far beneath him. He was a young man such as you may find in any of our large cities. Many like him have I seen in New York or Washington, who, dressed in the garb that betokens civilization, still have indelibly stamped upon their countenances treachery, immorality, ignorance.

Spotted Eagle was a dandy, or what the Indians call "heap much dress young man." All that he lacked to be admitted into the same class as the Eastern dandy was the cigarette habit; but as Indians know little about cigarettes, and generally stuff them in their pipes when they get possession of any, this habit was to him unknown. Spotted Eagle had cast side glances at Wanneta since her return to the tribe, and his conversation with the medicine-man had clearly indicated to the latter that the young man was deeply in love with the Indian maiden. Old Wa-da-ha was a good judge of human nature, and he knew that Spotted Eagle would eagerly enter on any scheme that would result in the winning of the girl.

The medicine-man reached the tipi out of breath, and entered without ceremony. Spotted Eagle was reclining upon a large bear skin, smoking a small pipe. As soon as Wa-da-ha entered, he sprang from his seat, and, advancing, greeted his guest. Without beating about the bush, the old rascal began: "Young man, I have a way by which you can win this girl. By so doing you will get as your squaw one of the finest women in our entire tribe. She would be glad to have you make your advances, and you had better go and play the flute to-night."

Spotted Eagle presented the medicine-man with a valuable pack of furs in recognition of his services, and promised to begin the flute song the very next evening near Wanneta's tipi.

Nothing of importance took place in the village the following day, Wanneta's visit to Strong Heart being rather brief.

As it was the custom to give notice by some little present or token before commencing the flute song, in order that the maiden might expect her lover, Spotted Eagle sent by messenger to Wanneta's lodge that afternoon a very handsome silver bracelet that he happened to possess, and a little piece of well-tanned deer skin, upon which was engraved, in Indian poetry, a sentiment, the whole having about the same purport as a valentine with us. Wanneta was without the lodge sewing for her mother when this arrived, carried by a small boy, to whom Spotted Eagle had given a handsome tobacco-pouch for his services. No sooner had she glanced at the articles than she interpreted their meaning. At first, a feeling of anger possessed her, then she looked upon the matter as a joke. She did not know who had prompted the young man to send the gifts, or she would have treated the entire case with contempt.

The Indians, when courting, observe several methods. One is playing the flute. They have a little reed flute, not unmusical, and of a very weird sound, which is used for this purpose alone. The brave who desires to wed approaches within a hundred yards of the wigwam of his intended, just after dusk some evening, and, seating him-

self, begins a plaintive melody. If the maiden favours the suit, she comes forth from the wigwam, shyly at first, but growing gradually bolder, she advances toward the spot where her lover is seated. As she approaches, he pours into the tones of the flute the feelings that possess his soul, and what is lacking in beauty and perfection, is atoned for by their sincerity. As Strong Heart had made no advances as yet, she decided to accept the whole matter as a joke, and dismiss the young man that evening, telling him that she could not love him and that he must not hope. So she waited rather impatiently for dusk to come, at first with some trembling, and later with considerable expectation of the fun in store for her and the amusement she would receive from the young man's efforts.

She told her father and mother frankly of his coming, and of her feelings for Strong Heart, and as they knew well that Spotted Eagle's reputation was fair, but not good, they looked upon the matter as a huge joke, and teased Wanneta not a little about it. In any civilized community attentions from a young man like Spotted Eagle would be thought insulting to a respectable girl, but, as we have already said, the Indians, good and bad, mingle very freely in their social life. No young man will continue his advances to a girl if they are not wanted, nor will he say anything improper of one who bears a good reputation. An Indian girl, leading a life in the open air, becomes hardened to things which we consider horrifying, yet, at the same time, she is pure and above reproach.

Scarcely had the sun disappeared over the vast stretch of prairie, than the plaintive notes of a flute were heard issuing from a clump of bushes about a hundred yards from the tipi. The player was evidently in a desperate strait, for he piped and blew with all his might, and made such a noise that it called forth the remarks of all in the village within a quarter of a mile of the scene. The Indians do not like to court with a flute, and they do it with reluctance, as it makes too much publicity. In order to understand clearly what takes place, imagine some well-known man in New York taking a hand-organ in front of the residence of the lady he admires and grinding out tunes. Of course, there would be a great deal of merriment at his expense, and it would take considerable nerve for him to continue any length of time. So it is in the Indian village. As soon as the notes of the flute are heard, about half the youngsters in the camp, who are longing for a good time, flock thither, and the young man who is musically inclined has his hands full in keeping the youngsters away, and at the same time continuing his strains on the reed.

As it was, Wanneta nearly reached him before there was any disturbance, and then a rather remarkable thing occurred. Just as she was about to speak and dismiss the young man, Chief Rain-in-the-face, who happened to be in that end of the village, passed by, and, seeing her, stopped instantly. His ear caught the music, and he immediately guessed its import.

Strong Heart had told him that he intended to ask Wanneta to become his squaw as soon as he was strong

enough to get about, so the chief was greatly surprised to see her going to meet this young man. He looked at her a moment as she paused, and said, "Wanneta, who calls you with a flute?"

"It is Spotted Eagle. I go to tell him to go away. I do not care for him."

"Wanneta," said the chief, "you are very indiscreet. This young man is not a proper person, and you must not go to see him. Go back to the lodge."

"Chief," said Wanneta, "I was foolish. I was wrong. I came out to laugh at the young man, and tell him to leave. I ought not to have come at all."

"I will tell him to leave," said Rain-in-the-face, and, striding rapidly over to where Spotted Eagle was, said: "Spotted Eagle, Wanneta does not want to hear your music. She does not care for you. Go at once."

Spotted Eagle stopped playing, and, looking up in a sort of half-ashamed way, said: "The great medicine-man, Wa-da-ha, told me she thought a great deal of me."

"He did, did he?" hissed the chief. "That old villain shall not live one hour in the tribe. He is a liar. Go to your lodge, and do not bother Wanneta."

"You are our chief," said Spotted Eagle, "and I will obey you, but you have no right to tell me whom I shall court and whom I shall not. That is for me to decide."

A crowd had gathered by this time, and Rain-in-the-face, becoming angry, let his passion get the better of his good nature, and said: "Leave instantly, young man. Go!"

Turning on his heel, the chief strode toward his tipi, while the crowd gathered around the disconsolate lover, some to hoot, and others to laugh. Although somewhat of a coward, Spotted Eagle could not stand being tormented, and, losing all patience, he seized an Indian boy standing near and planted a vigorous kick in his ribs. The boy went down with a howl; there was an instant of surprise upon the part of his companions, and then a number of them, from twelve to sixteen years old, assailed the Indian on all sides. The flute was broken in the scuffle, and Spotted Eagle was pretty badly used. He succeeded in knocking some of the boys down, and at the sudden approach of a number of men who heard the noise they fled, leaving him to make his way back to his wigwam. He returned thither without further molestation, about the maddest Indian upon the whole Sioux reservation. His neatly trimmed buckskin leggings were soiled and torn; the beaded work on his beautifully embroidered shirt was torn off in places, and the shirt disfigured; while his handsome face was cut and scratched and terribly swollen.

The medicine-man came around to see him about ten o'clock, and found him in no pleasant frame of mind. This reckless young man had little respect for Wa-da-ha, and had no use for him except to further his own ends, so that as he had reason to believe that he had been tricked, he gave him a good round cursing as soon as he entered the lodge.

The medicine-man relied too much on the services of Spotted Eagle to get out of patience, so he took the abuse

in good nature, and in return proposed that they hold an indignation meeting to determine whether the medicine-man was to be next to the chief in the tribe, or whether this upstart girl from the East was to decide their affairs. This was a very rash move, and they might have known that it would bring no good to themselves, but as in every case when anger blinds the senses, we harm ourselves only in endeavouring to injure others.

Wa-da-ha and Spotted Eagle, as they talked, became more and more excited, until a number of others, attracted by the noise, entered the wigwam to see what was the matter. By dint of persuasion and the use of his great influence, the medicine-man induced some fifteen or twenty to accompany him to the council-house. There he sounded the assembly cry, beat the tom-tom, and lighted the fire. He soon had the satisfaction of seeing a goodly number gather to hear what was to follow. He began a red-hot speech, in which he greatly enlarged and magnified his wrongs, and was about to denounce the chief; but when he had reached this point in the oration, and had, as he thought, fired his hearers with his own spirit, the chief suddenly appeared in the entrance. Rain-in-the-face had heard what was going on, and with twenty-five of his braves came to take the medicine-man prisoner. He expected to hand him over, as he had threatened, to the Crows. As the chief entered the doorway, Wa-da-ha caught sight of him, and called out in loud tones, "There he comes, there is your chief. Until to-day I was respected, but I have been greatly wronged; I am no more the great medicine-man, Wa-da-ha, in his

eyes. Warriors, judge between me and Rain-in-the-face and see which—— "

"Stop there, I say," cried Rain-in-the-face. "You are exciting our people to take up arms against me. This is treason. Stop, stop, or your life shall pay the forfeit. These my braves will stand by me."

"I will not stop," cried the medicine-man, "I will speak;" and he called on those who believed in him to come to his support. Only a few obeyed, as most of those present preferred their chief. Rain-in-the-face sprang forward, followed by two other men, while John Runner and Two Bears stood irresolute which side to espouse. Springing into the centre of the throng where the medicine-man was standing, Rain-in-the-face seized him, and commanded his warriors to bind him, which they at once proceeded to do. The greatest excitement reigned, and for a few moments a conflict looked inevitable. Fortunately no blood was shed, and some excited adherents of Wa-da-ha's cause were forcibly held and thus kept from using their arms. The council broke up amidst a tremendous din, and Wa-da-ha was carried to the chief's lodge, where he was laid near the entrance, bound hand and foot.

CHAPTER VI.

THE TRIBE ARRANGES ITS ANNUAL BISON HUNT.

THE noise and confusion during the excitement at the council-house was terrific. Of course, every one in the entire village heard it, and hastened to learn its meaning. Among those who feared the worst was Wanneta. She had heard rumours that the medicine-man, Wa-da-ha, had attempted to raise an insurrection against the chief. Her heart was filled with terror, and she remembered the fearful cursings her grandfather had uttered in the lodge of Rain-in-the-face. Was it true that these curses were effectual, or were they empty words, such as the teachers in the school had told her? She believed that they were of no avail, yet she feared. While she was in this state of suspense, the thought of her friend, Strong Heart, came to her. Should she go to his wigwam to see how he fared during all the excitement and turmoil? Did he need her? It was nearly eleven o'clock, and high time that she was in her father's tipi, but she could not resist the temptation of paying another visit to him, so she sped swiftly through the darkness in the direction of his wigwam.

There was no one about the village, for every one had hurried to the council-house. Reaching the tipi, Wanneta entered noiselessly, for her moccasined feet made no

sound upon the hard floor of the lodge. Her breath came quick and fast as she stepped to the side of the room where he lay, for it was pitch-dark, the fires having gone out. No one was there but Strong Heart, both his father and mother being at the council-house. Strong Heart was conscious of a presence near him, and called out:

"Who is there?"

"It is I—Wanneta," she replied.

"What brings you here so late?" he asked. She knelt by his side, and told him briefly the story of the night's doings. When she had finished, he seemed more impressed by the part that Spotted Eagle had played than by the doings at the council.

"Wanneta," he said, "I am very much hurt at what you have told me. I have a very high opinion of you, and think more of you than you fancy I do. Why did you set out to meet this man? He is bad; he could do you no good, and he may boast in the tribe that he came near winning you to be his squaw."

"Oh, will he do that?" she wailed; "surely you are mistaken, Strong Heart!"

"No; he is an unscrupulous scoundrel, and will do almost anything to further his ends or give him more notoriety." At this, Wanneta sank down and moaned aloud. She could perceive, by his tone and manner, that she had wounded Strong Heart deeply, and that he felt her action much more keenly than she had ever imagined he could.

"Oh, Strong Heart," she said, "I meant no harm. I

was only intending a little fun, as a young and foolish girl often will. Surely no harm can come of it."

"I hope there will not—I sincerely do," replied Strong Heart.

"Have I offended you?" she asked. "You saved my life at the cliffs, and for that I can never do enough for you. I——"

"Stay!" said the brave; "you have done much for me already, and I am cruel to speak to you of this matter further. It is a mere trifle—not worth half the talk we have wasted on it." At this moment a noise of men outside, and loud, angry words were heard. "Listen, Wanneta, you have been with me but five days, yet I know you well; you are a dear, noble girl, and—and—I love you! Do you not care for me?" As she was listening, with bated breath, to every word he said, the noise outside suddenly increased, and before the young folk could speak again, the space in front of the wigwam was filled with a crowd, who dragged a man, bound and gagged, toward the entrance. They laid him in a back corner, and stationed three of their number as guard over him.

While this was being done the throng outside increased, and the greatest uproar prevailed. Some were shouting, "Kill him, kill him!" Others, "Hear Rain-in-the-face, he wants to speak!"

Wanneta crouched near the side of her wounded lover and listened in affright to the mob outside.

Suddenly there arose a well-known voice above the storm, which cried, "Silence, the chief speaks!"

There was an instant hush, and Rain-in-the-face spoke to them from his tipi entrance, as follows:

"Friends, you have seen some stirring doings during the last half hour. An hour ago I was sitting in my wigwam, little dreaming that mutiny was about to spring up in our village. Suddenly there came to me a runner. He said, 'The medicine-man is going to the council-house; there will be trouble.' I paid no attention to this. Then there came another runner soon afterward and he whispered, 'The medicine-man is in the council-house and has a large gathering; he is trying to turn the people against you.' Then I called some of my trusty warriors, and we went there. You know the rest. We have taken this vile reptile and tied him so that he cannot use his fangs to do more mischief. What shall we do with him? He deserves death, but if he will promise to return to his vocation without further trouble, on account of what he has done for the tribe in the past, I will release him. What say you?"

"Kill him, kill him; he is a dog, he is a traitor; let him die!" Thus cried the mob, growing larger and fiercer each moment.

"Well, it shall be as you wish; bring the wretch forward."

Wanneta waited to hear no more; she ran forward and clasped the chief by the arm. "Spare him, he is my grandfather; he did not mean half what he said; he will promise never to displease you again. Oh, spare him for my sake!" and she threw herself at the feet of Rain-in-the-face.

"Get up, my child," said the chief. "This man has done deeds worthy of death; he must die; the people demand it."

"Oh, ask them again. Hear me, oh friends; you all know me well, how I have worked for the good of the tribe; do not kill him! What he said was in the heat of passion! He is doubtless sorry for it now. Oh, spare him!"

"What say you, people?" cried the chief.

There was a short consultation, then the mob cried as if with one voice: "Let him go. Kill him for the next ill word that he utters."

Turning to the guard in the tipi, Rain-in-the-face said: "Bring the man forward and unbind him." They loosened the thongs and led him out to the chief. "You heard what was said, old man; what have you to say for yourself?"

"Let me go, Chief; I will do as becometh a medicine-man after this. I will not find fault with anything you may do; pray let me go."

"Well, go, and see to it that you never enter my lodge again; that is the condition. The next time you come in here, whether to bring good news or bad, you die."

Then turning to the crowd, the chief called out: "To your homes. Let the guard appointed for to-night begin the watch; the rest of you to sleep."

The people dispersed, and there was silence soon throughout the entire camp. At midnight, there was no evidence of the scenes that had just taken place, and from all sides could be heard from the tipis the snoring of sleeping braves.

Wanneta lay upon her couch several hours before she dropped asleep. She thought over and over again those three words, "I love you," words that have been spoken millions of times in every language, words that are as dear to the lonely heart of the savage maiden as to those that beat in the breasts of her civilized sisters. She was happy in her thoughts, happy that he had forgiven her for her indiscretion; her only regret was that their conversation had been so abruptly ended by the quelling of the mutiny. But she should see him again soon, she would tell him something in return, and with these thoughts she fell asleep.

The time hung very heavy on Wanneta's hands during the three days following Wa-da-ha's unfortunate attempt. She went to see Strong Heart morning, noon, and night, but had no chance to speak with him upon the subject which lay nearest her heart. The excitement of the night had given him a fresh attack of fever, but his father and mother would give up the care of him to no one, not even Wanneta. So it was that four days passed before she could see him alone.

Then she was the bearer of news of such importance that, on hearing it, both Rain-in-the-face and his squaw left for the council-house, leaving Wanneta and Strong Heart alone. Two messengers had arrived from the other Sioux reservation, saying that the buffalo hunt would begin the next day, and that the tribe must move immediately to the upper camp, which was to wait until the lower one had joined them. The runners said, also, that they had heard of the slaughter of many Crows by

one young man, and they came to learn the truth of this report and to offer their warriors, in case the Crows should march against the tribe in large numbers.

While Wanneta and Strong Heart are exchanging confidences, let us leave them for a few moments and turn to the council-house, where the meeting is being held. As soon as the chief and the messengers arrived—this was in the morning, about nine o'clock—the town-crier beat his tom-tom, shouted aloud the news as he ran through the streets of the village, and by this means called together two-thirds of the people in a few moments. The chief, sub-chief, and several head warriors, occupied the centre of the lodge. Next to them sat the two messengers who had brought the news, while the others were crowded together, some sitting and some standing.

"The runners to our village from our brothers above," said Rain-in-the-face, "bring news that the buffalo hunt will begin to-morrow. It is therefore necessary, for all who wish to go, to begin preparations, so that we can set out to join our brothers by noon. The twenty young braves who are to remain at the agency and guard Strong Heart during our absence, had better move there at once. I wish, also, to have several squaws go with them to prepare their food. Any that do not want to go on the hunt must settle back of the agency buildings, where they will be safe, should the Crows take the war-path. Our brothers who have brought us this news had better remain and go with us this noon, in order to show us how to join the upper tribe, in case they should have

moved on ahead of us. I shall send my swiftest runner to notify the tribe that we start at midday, and will be with them to-morrow night. John Runner will bear the news, and start at once on his fastest pony."

When the chief had ended, the council at once broke up, and each man hurried to his tipi to pack his effects. John Runner was the chief messenger of the tribe. Without delay, he set out on his journey of eighty miles, and, by the time the tribe was under way, was thirty miles distant on his swift and lonely journey northward.

The best runners in the tribe were always selected to bear news. They rode until their horses gave out, or until they reached their destination. If the horse broke down, they continued the journey on foot. Indians often run one hundred miles at the rate of seven and a half miles an hour.

The moment Rain-in-the-face and Wawa left the wigwam, Wanneta ran quickly to her lover's side, and looked anxiously into his face. The buffalo robe which hung at night in front of the entrance had been thrown back, as is the custom during the day-time, and sufficient light entered for her to make out clearly the various lights and shades that came and went on his manly face as she talked with him.

"We have not been alone, Strong Heart, since the night that grandfather was brought in, tied hand and foot.

"I have a great deal of news for you. The runners have come to the camp with the word that our people must move at once for the buffalo hunt. Therefore the escort

and the squaws which will cook for them will soon start for the agency buildings, where a small temporary village will be erected. I suppose that, with the stragglers who do not go to the hunt, and the guard, there will be, all told, nearly fifty of us there. The Crows, who are furious at their defeat, will not dare to attack us so near the fort of the pale-faces, where the soldiers will be sent by the Great Father at Washington in case of need. It will be very quiet, and I am sure you will get on much more rapidly than here, where you are disturbed by constant excitements."

"I shall be very glad to go away from the noise, as I can get well much faster where it is more quiet. When I am well and strong, I love excitement, I love warfare, I love the chase; but when ill I am as a weak woman and want none of these things."

"You must get well as soon as you can, Strong Heart, and then you will be able to do all these things. The squaw man, Richards, says your shoulder is doing very nicely, but that you must be patient and very careful, or you will be maimed for life."

"I will be very careful," said Strong Heart, "for my people may have wars with the Crows on my account, and I want to help them defend our homes. I can be of great help if I am strong and well, but if I have a shrivelled muscle, or a shortened arm, or a crooked shoulder, I am as a child and not as the brave son of Rain-in-the-face."

As the young man spoke of war and brave deeds he naturally became excited. Wanneta, seeing this, and

wishing to change the subject, told him that her horse, Brown Eyes, had been only very slightly injured by the bullet the Crow had fired, and that she was almost well enough to be ridden short distances. After this they both relapsed into silence.

The Indian, as I have said, is as a rule very unceremonious in love matters, although there are some exceptions. He uses a great deal of ceremony before he goes to war, and the medicine-man carries on incantations and other orgies, but when an Indian deals with matters which pertain to his heart, and selects a bride, he wastes but few words and little time. He is often rejected in his brief and almost loveless courtship, but if he wants a squaw very badly, he does not become discouraged, but keeps on regardless of rebuffs.

There are many customs prevalent among our American Indians which, looked at through the eyes of a white man, are absurd. On the other hand, if we put ourselves in their place we should certainly do no better, and very possibly worse. Their treatment of women and the way in which many select their squaws, by barter, is abhorrent to our ideas. What the Indian believes he believes with his whole soul, what he loves he holds sacred; for his friends he will do a great deal, but for his enemies he has no respect, never forgives them, and always speaks of them in utter contempt.

Strong Heart had met a number of whites on the agency, and by contact with traders and others had learned to speak a little English. Wanneta spoke it quite purely. When she told of her pony, or of the Crows,

Strong Heart's eyes would flash fire, and he would become nervous and agitated. But when she spoke of herself, this sterner nature gave place to a more quiet one.

"Wanneta," said he, "when you were here the other night I wanted to tell you how much I thought of you, and I was just about to do so when the interruption took place. Wanneta," he repeated, and stretching his right hand out toward her and taking hers in his own, he whispered softly into her willing ear his great love for her and his hopes that the affection was returned. She knelt down by his side, and taking his right hand and holding it closely in both her own, looked steadily into his face and repeated the words he asked her to say.

"You are sure that you love me very much?" said Strong Heart.

"Yes, dear Strong Heart—more than any one I have ever known."

"My shoulder hurts me so much that I cannot raise my head, and therefore cannot take the lover's kiss. Will you not kiss me, Wanneta?"

Without replying to his request, she bent over the couch of bear-skins, and, placing her hands on each side of his head, tenderly kissed his pale lips two or three times, and then straightened back again, with her soul brimful of such delight and ecstasy as true love alone can awaken in the breast of woman, be she savage or civilized.

"I loved you," said Wanneta, "from the day that we went to the cliffs; and so deep is my love, that I will never leave you so long as there is anything that you need

which my hands can bring to you. Gladly will I minister to your every want, dear Strong Heart."

"You are a good, kind, noble girl, Wanneta," said Strong Heart. She took his outstretched hand and held it in her own for a few moments, but just as he was about to say more, the chief and his wife came in with the news of the meeting at the council-house. Wanneta arose, and leaving her lover, ran back to her father's lodge to help her mother pack up for the buffalo hunt.

Two Bears brought up his ponies from the plain near by, and tied the halters to stakes securely driven into the ground, so that he could have them at a moment's notice. He then stripped the buffalo covering from the lodge-poles, bound these together, and fastened one end of them to the pony's back, while the other was allowed to drag upon the ground. Upon this mass of poles the lodge covering was bound, as was also a small stock of provisions. Of the remaining horses, he expected to use two as pack animals to bring back the meat taken in the chase, and the swiftest as his riding ponies for his own and his wife's use.

Taking down the lodges and packing took but little over two hours, so that the whole village was in motion shortly after noon.

It took active effort on the part of Wanneta to gain the consent of her parents to remain with Strong Heart, but by dint of much arguing and by suggesting that her little sister be left with her, she finally carried her point.

"You know, mother," said Wanneta, "that I have not seen you prepare the meat of the buffalo for a long time;

besides, it is my duty to stay and take care of Strong Heart; therefore, I cannot go with you." She had told her mother of Strong Heart's declaration of love, and had obtained the consent of her parents to become his squaw, in case he should ask her to take this step. Before the tribe started, some of the young men promised to put up a substantial lodge for Wanneta, and they told her that she was to have no fears, as it would be as well made as her father's, and would be ready for her before evening.

The breaking up of the village was a scene that one would long remember. Here and there a delayed Indian was taking the buffalo covering from his wigwam poles. The little wicker-work of poles looked most barren and desolate when stripped of its covering. It seemed hardly possible that human beings could live in such places, especially in the dead of winter, when there is but a quarter of an inch of protection from intense cold without. Yet they live, and are happy, and, until the white man came to change all, even thrived in these miserable abodes, preferring a life of danger, privation, and want, to one of ease and luxury, where food and clothing are plenty, but the word freedom is unknown.

The loud shouts of the men as they called to one another, and the angry ejaculation of some brave whose squaw was not doing her share of the work, rang out upon the air in unison with the laughing of children and the barkings of dogs. Presently a few who are all ready start out, their lodge-poles dragging and leaving a trail upon the ground. They are joined by hundreds in the next

half hour, and, a few moments later, the whole village is on the move across the prairie. As we listen, sounds of laughter and singing become fainter and fainter, and then cease altogether, except an occasional "hi-hi-hi" of some exulting brave, heard from the dim distance. Where there was a populous village two hours before, is now a barren waste, littered with broken kettles, bones, and splintered arrows. Hard-beaten circles show where the wigwams stood, and well-defined paths leading down to the water's edge mark the site.

Wawa remained, as did Wanneta and her sister. About twenty squaws and old women, too feeble to go on the hunt, who were to cook for Strong Heart's escort, together with some thirty stragglers, were all who stayed behind. They made, in all, about seventy-five persons. As soon as the village had broken up, some of the braves made a litter out of the lodge-poles, covering them with soft hides and skins, and tenderly placing Strong Heart upon it, began their five miles' march to the agency. The squaws and others, with some twelve or fifteen head of horses, and the material for the erection of a number of lodges, followed. The agency was reached without mishap, the site for the village pointed out by the agent, and before sunset, all the tipis were up and everything going on as smoothly as if no change had been made. The braves considered it quite an honour to guard the chief's son, and, to show their feeling, two of them stood as sentries at his doorway all night. They had learned this from seeing white soldiers guard their camps in the Indian country. They continued to do this every night

until the patient had nearly recovered. The escort was well armed, and had nearly two hundred rounds of ammunition each.

Before leaving, the chief had sent a message to the agent, telling him why the little village was placed near him, and asking, in case the Crows should be seen in the neighbourhood, to send one or two runners up the Missouri River to find the hunting party, and to telegraph for troops to be sent into the region.

Leaving the Indians safely quartered at the agency, let us follow the tribe to the scene of the hunt. They rode across the rolling prairie, skirting the Bad Lands, until darkness came on. They encamped over night, and, at break of day, were again on the march. They moved steadily, reaching the upper Sioux reservation late in the afternoon, where they were received with demonstrations of great joy. The next morning, shortly after sunrise, the whole Sioux nation, consisting of about six thousand persons, started for the buffalo country. The movement of this large body must have been intensely interesting, and to those who love to study Indian nature, a trip with a people so numerous would afford every advantage. Their strength would put the Indians in excellent humour, and they would be at their best, for they feared no attack from hostile tribes or from the whites.

In the days of the seventies, the whole Black Hills swarmed with buffalo, and it was no unusual thing for Indians, on their annual hunts, to kill many thousands, and carry back for winter use as much dried beef as seven or eight thousand ponies could drag. When we consider

the enormous destruction of buffalo by these hunts, and the still greater destruction caused by the hide-hunters, it is a wonder that the American bison lasted until 1885.

Spotted Eagle and the medicine-man, since the latter's defeat, had been very cautious as to what they said and did. They both went with the hunt, and it was understood between them that when they had an opportunity they would talk over a scheme to revenge themselves upon the chief. The medicine-man felt especially sore over his treatment, and although in the village he was very courteous and pleasant, when he was by himself or with Spotted Eagle his true nature asserted itself, and all the oaths that his imagination could invent or his fancy suggest, and the curses with which his profession had made him familiar, were pronounced upon those whom he hated.

They had been out about four days before any buffalo were discovered. There was a guard five miles ahead of the main body; on each side scouts were thrown out at the same distance, to bring tidings of any herds that might be sighted. A hunting party of such size without guards and scouts in advance would be utterly unable to secure any game, hence the precaution. At last the scouts came hurrying in with the glad news that a herd of fully eight or nine hundred were grazing about five miles away. Every one in the entire party was greatly excited at this, and arrangements were hastily made by the head chiefs for surrounding the herd. The country through which they were marching was rather hilly and very favourable for their plans. A thousand of the best horsemen were selected, three hundred sent ahead, three hundred to the

right, and three hundred to the left, in order to drive the herd toward a little basin-shaped valley where the slaughter was to take place. The horsemen galloped well around the herd and approached it from the rear, the wind being in their favour. The women and children were instructed to remain where they were until the chase was over, then they were to come on and cut up the meat. The remaining horsemen advanced cautiously until near the basin, where they awaited the approach of the herd.

The hunters who had gone ahead, surrounded and closed in upon the animals in about an hour and a half. They had them under good headway, and turned them in the direction of the basin. The Indians in waiting saw a heavy dust to the northward, and knowing that the herd was coming, made all ready and awaited the first approach. A few moments later, the bulls and leaders dashed over the hills fringing the north side of the basin, and plunged into the hollow. When about half of them had crossed the ridge, the hunters charged, with loud shouts and waving of blankets, and began the slaughter. A number fell at the first volley, few of the men being without guns. The charge of the Indians in front so frightened the herd that some of them wheeled to the right, and the hunters taking advantage of this, completely surrounded them and poured in from all sides a destructive fire. Not one of the animals escaped, and it was a few moments only before the slaughter was complete. The ground was red with blood, for the herd had fallen within a small space. The Indian women having

heard the firing, and knowing from its sound that the hunt was about over, came forward with the whole camp outfit and began skinning and cutting up the animals. While they were doing this the medicine-man went through some of his ceremonies, giving thanks to the Great Spirit for sending them so much meat.

CHAPTER VII.

WA-DA-HA AND SPOTTED EAGLE TURN TRAITORS.

THE squaws, assisted by some of the men, worked late that night preparing the meat for winter's use. For the next two or three days the whole party remained at the spot, to wait until the buffalo which had been cut into thin strips had dried in the sun. When it had once been cut and hung up, there was nothing for it but patience until the sun should do the rest. Then the dried beef would be packed in small skin bags and the openings sewed up very tight. Sometimes the meat was pounded fine or chopped up and enclosed in these skins, but oftener it was packed in strips. While waiting for it to dry, small scouting parties were sent out in various directions for ten or fifteen miles to look for fresh herds. During one of these excursions a party of twenty Sioux came suddenly upon eight Crows, captured them without loss, and brought them safely back to camp.

This created considerable excitement in the village, and had it not been for the fact that the Sioux were upon a hunting expedition, and thinking little of war, the probability is that the Crows would have been killed or tortured on the night of the day they were taken. A rather singular and unexpected occurrence took place, to which they owed their lives and liberty. The old medicine-man, Wa-da-ha, heard of the capture of these Crows two

or three minutes after they had been brought in. An idea flashed through his crafty head, upon which he decided to act without delay. He hastened to the lodge in which Spotted Eagle lived, and calling him outside, told him to come at once to the chief's wigwam. The lodge of Rain-in-the-face was surrounded by a space of nearly a hundred feet in diameter, so that in case any meeting should be held there would be room for a large gathering. An Indian village is always laid out with a space around the chief's lodge. The location of the lodge may be temporary, but there is always room for a council or dance near the head chief's tipi.

They had no more than reached the opening and taken their stations near the entrance to his wigwam, when horsemen approached, driving before them the eight Crows, with their hands tied behind them. A crowd of hooting men, women, and children, gathered about. As the throng increased, Rain-in-the-face, who had been consulting with Gopher about some tribal matters, appeared on the scene, and taking in the situation at a glance, called for the village crier, who was bidden to summon a council. In a few moments, the space surrounding the tipi was crowded with men, and without further delay the discussion as to what was to be done with the prisoners began.

"Rain-in-the-face," said Sitting Bull, head chief of the upper reservation, "these, our enemies, have been taken by our young men. As you know, the Crow dogs who attacked your son, Strong Heart, were repulsed with great loss. Before we condemn them to death, let us call

one of the squaw men who understands their tongue and hear what they have to say."

"Well said, great chief," said Red Cloud, first sub-chief of the upper reservation. "We will hear what these dogs have to say. Go call Richards, the squaw man." Richards was in the crowd not far away, and on hearing his name called came forward.

"Ask these vile Crows what they will do if we let them go," said Rain-in-the-face. Richards asked the question, and the Crows consulted a moment, and then replied: "We will not take up arms against the Sioux nation." The interpreter repeated their words to the chief, who called it out in loud tones to the assembled multitude. A mighty shout of disapproval went up, the Indians grunting and hooting and making so great a noise that it was some moments before order was restored sufficiently for Sitting Bull to be heard. The head chief raised his voice so as to reach those standing back among the wigwams, and spoke as follows: "If these Crow dogs are killed, their countrymen may attack the women and children left at the agency, and thus we shall lose some of our best people, and have to stop our hunt. I favour letting them go on their solemn promise that they will not disturb us again. We do not want to stop this hunt, neither do we want to lose the women, children, and braves left at the agency." At this the Indians set up another great shout, not as loud as the first, because many of them respected the wishes of their chief, but still enough joined in it to convince the leaders that it would be very hard to keep the warriors from taking the lives of the captives.

The medicine-man had been standing back out of sight, and up to the present moment had said nothing; but he now stepped forward, and raising his voice, called out in loud tones for the assembled multitude to listen. Rain-in-the-face had no regard whatever for Wa-da-ha, but still suffered him to speak, thinking that it would do no harm, and knowing his influence on the tribe. Should he say anything not in accordance with the wishes of his superior, he could be quickly checked.

"My people," called out Wa-da-ha, "these before you are low Crow dogs, and they certainly deserve death." At this, he was interrupted by a great shout of approval which went up from a thousand throats. Waving his hand for them to be silent, the old fraud continued: "Yes; they ought to die over the fire. Their flesh should be cut and scratched, their heads scalped, and they should be made to know how mighty and cruel is the Sioux nation. But think, my people, if we do this, as our chief has said, we must stop the hunt; we shall lose those whom we love who are now living near the agency. We cannot do this; we cannot lose our annual hunt; nor would it be at all wise to get the Crows on the war-path, and thus have them cause us much trouble. We are not afraid of them, for we have taken many of their scalps and done them great mischief. Be wise, O brothers; let these people go, and keep peace in the nation until our hunt shall have finished, and until we are where our people can be protected." At this, some of the warriors objected, and raised a great protest, but most of them agreed to accept the decision of the medicine-man and the chiefs.

Seeing, now, that prompt action alone was necessary, Rain-in-the-face and Sitting Bull arose from their seats on the ground, and commanded the warriors to allow the Crows to pass in safety. At this some little objection was made, but when thirty or forty armed Sioux appeared, and marching in front, behind, and on each side of the Crows, led them to the outskirts of the village, there was no hand uplifted to stay the progress of the escort and the prisoners.

The Crows were allowed to go with their horses, but without their arms, which were taken from them. It was about dusk when they left the camp. As soon as the council broke up, the medicine-man and Spotted Eagle ran swiftly to the corral where the horses were kept, and securing two of the swiftest animals, set out to overtake them.

Each carried a Winchester and a supply of shells. The Crows had ridden rapidly for four or five miles, and then settled down to a steady lope, while they talked over the events of the day. The old medicine-man knew their tongue quite well, and although he would have been ashamed to let his own people hear him speak it, he would not hesitate to betray the secrets of his own nation in the very language of those to whom he would sell himself. They had not been more than one hour on the trail before they came in sight of the men they were following. It was bright moonlight. The Indians were too busy talking to notice the approach of Spotted Eagle and the medicine-man until the latter were close upon them. At the moment they heard the horses, and turned in alarm,

the medicine-man called out, in their own tongue: "Fear not; I bring peace—I have great news for you. Wait; do not run. We are friends." Thereupon the Crows pulled up, and waited until Wa-da-ha and Spotted Eagle drew near, but on seeing that they were Sioux and were armed, they were about to fly in dismay, when Wa-da-ha called out once more, and assured them of his intention to do them no harm, again declaring that he was the bearer of important news. Riding up alongside, the old rascal spoke as follows: "I am the chief Sioux medicine-man in the entire lower tribe. This man with me is Spotted Eagle, one of our bravest and best warriors." At this allusion to himself, Spotted Eagle chuckled gleefully. "We have been greatly wronged by our tribe, and have been abused and insulted. We seek revenge. We will lead the Crows to the agency, where they can attack the few Sioux left there with perfect safety, as all the rest of the nation is on its annual hunt. I will do this, provided you will agree to certain things which we shall ask of you."

"Why do you fight your own people?" asked one of the Crows.

"Because," said the medicine-man, "I seek revenge on them. The young man here seeks revenge also. We wish your warriors to hearken when we reach your village, and go with us to the spot where about one hundred of my people are encamped. There are only twenty warriors with them, and they will fall an easy prey into your hands."

The Crows were greatly surprised by the offer, and did

not know what reply to make. They talked together, and turning to Wa-da-ha, one of them said: "Go with us to our village, and see what the chief says." Of course, they were delighted at the prospect of having these Sioux lead them against those at the agency. What the reward for doing this was, made no difference to them; all they wanted was revenge on the Sioux, and this they would carry out to the letter whenever a chance might arise.

"What do you want for doing this, medicine-man?" asked one of the Crows.

"The young man here," replied Wa-da-ha, "wants a young woman at the agency, by the name of Wanneta, given to him unharmed to be his squaw. I want to be made your head medicine-man in return for my services."

"Yes, but we know not whether your medicine is powerful. We have one medicine-man, and he is very great. Our people would not like to give him up for one who comes from our enemies."

"My medicine can be shown when we reach the village," said Wa-da-ha, "and you can judge whether it is powerful or not. You must promise us that we shall not be harmed, or we will not go to the village with you."

"We grant you safe escort to our village," said the Crow, "and will take you at once to the lodge of the chief, where you shall receive food, and where he will call a council, although it will be very late at night when we arrive."

The party rode on in silence for some time. The Crows were rather afraid of their Sioux companions,

whose strange request seemed so unnatural that they could not but believe some trap was being laid into which they would be lured. They were very watchful, and had the medicine-man or Spotted Eagle raised his rifle from the pommel of his saddle, the Crows would have scattered instantly and fled like the wind. They rode on hour after hour in silence, this Judas, who was to betray his own flesh and blood to his hereditary enemies, and his accomplice.

About midnight they reached the village, and entered it without disturbing any of the sleeping Indians. Riding straight to the chief's lodge, the young man who had acted as spokesman for the Crows, called out in loud tones: "Black Elk, Black Elk, come out. Here are two Sioux who want to speak with you." At this, the chief arose from his pile of buffalo robes and strode forth from his wigwam, rifle in hand. "What do you do here, you enemies of my nation?" said he.

The medicine-man, not in the least dismayed, told his story, and made the same offer that he had made to the young men who had accompanied him from the Sioux camp. Spotted Eagle could not understand or speak the Crow tongue, and listened to what was said in ignorance. He was somewhat frightened at the warlike manner of the chief, but upon seeing the calmness with which the medicine-man bore himself, he gritted his teeth, and resolved to brave any dangers, surmount all obstacles, and commit any wickedness that might be necessary if he could thus be able to claim Wanneta as his squaw. The chief having heard what Wa-da-ha had to say, sent a

number of the young men through the village, calling the warriors to meet at the council-house. He went in advance himself, with a few of his men and the two Sioux, and kindled a bright fire in the centre of the room, so that all present could see the Sioux and hear what they had to say.

It was only a few moments before the Crows had assembled and filled the large room to the outer door. There were many glances of hate directed toward the Sioux, but as both knew that presence of mind and courage would alone enable them to carry their point, they did not seem in the least dismayed or disheartened by the cold reception they were receiving. As soon as all had seated themselves, the chief, Black Elk, took a large pipe with a long stem, which had been lighted and handed him, and drawing from it clouds of smoke, swallowed them, and blew the volume through his nose, then passed it to the Sioux, who did likewise. After the council-pipe had been smoked, Black Elk arose and announced that the medicine-man, Great Wa-da-ha, of the Sioux nation, had come to speak important words to them, and he hoped that these words would be listened to by those present, and that none would interrupt or say aught until Wa-da-ha should have finished. The chief bowed toward the medicine-man, who arose to his feet and began, in the Crow tongue, to explain to those present the object of his visit. The opening remarks are hardly worth giving here, but the closing words, being full of fire, may be of interest to the reader:

"I was a great man in the tribe. When I said 'come

here,' the young men came; when I said 'go there,' the young men went. I made it rain, I made it thunder, I brought game, I made the fish ascend the rivers, I cured the sick, and I drove the evil spirits away from the tribe. Did they care for me for doing this; have they respected my old age? No; as a reward for my great efforts, they bound me hand and foot—they carried me like a dog, and laid me on the ground. The chief rubbed his hands together gleefully over me. The children hooted at the great medicine-man, and his name, which was once respected, became a by-word.

"This young man whom I have brought with me, loved a young maiden. He went to play the flute at her door. The chief knew that this young man was a friend of mine, and, happening along when he was playing to his sweetheart, stopped and listened. Did he pass on? No! He took the young man and shook him up; he slapped his face, and broke his flute. What had the young man done? Nothing! He was a friend of mine."

The medicine-man well knew how to work upon the minds of the Crows, so changing his subject a little, he began in this wise:

"The chief laughs at the strength of the Crows. He says that they are weak—that they are dogs. He says that when they come to his village, he will not torture them as if they were men; he will take their guns and kick them out, as he did your young men this evening." At this, a mighty shout of disapproval went up from the assembled throng. Seeing how well he was getting on, the

medicine-man began his final effort. "The son of the chief now boasts that he killed thirty of your young men with his own hand. Will your people sit here idly and know that these words of slander and contempt are passing Rain-in-the-face's lips? Spring to arms—spring up! Why sit you here idle? Come with me, and I will show you where to strike, and how to strike hard." Then, lowering his voice and bending slightly forward, with an expression upon his countenance well portraying the hellish nature of his soul, he hissed: "There are one hundred Sioux, mostly women and children, near the agency. They have but twenty young men as a guard. Come with me, and in two days you shall have scalps in place of those that Strong Heart took." As he closed the sentence, the murmur of approval, which had begun softly, increased to a mighty shout, and the Crow warriors present, with loud "ki-yis" and cheers, brandished their weapons, and from hundreds of throats issued the war-whoop so loud and shrill that the very walls of the great council-house seemed to rock with the sound.

"All we want," said the medicine-man, "in return is, that the young girl at the agency be not hurt, and that she be given to this young man for his squaw, and that you make me a medicine-man in your tribe." The tumult here became so great that it was impossible for Wa-da-ha to proceed, and the chief, Black Elk, arose. But it was not until after shouting, "Be still—be still," a number of times that he at last succeeded in obtaining something like order. He then assured the two Sioux that they would be protected, and that they should lead the attack

on the agency two days later, and that if all was as they represented their demands should be granted.

Then the council broke up, and the whole tribe returned to their lodges, with the understanding that a great war-dance was to be held the next night. The medicine-man and Spotted Eagle were shown an empty tipi, which they were to occupy during their stay. Crawling into this, these two wretches congratulated one another upon the success of their scheme, and rolling themselves in the buffalo robes, slept more soundly than many a man whose conscience is clear of all thought of crime or treachery.

The next day nothing unusual occurred in the camp, the Crows making ready for the attack upon the agency. At dusk that night the war-dance began. As this is somewhat similar to the Sioux dance, described in the previous chapter, it is hardly necessary to give a description of it. The medicine-man, decked out in what finery he could borrow or manufacture for the occasion, was present, and took an active part in the proceedings.

The next morning, at break of day, fully one thousand armed Crows, mounted upon good horses, set out for the agency, one hundred and fifty miles distant. They marched quite leisurely that day, so as not to weary the horses, and halted at dusk and slept through the night upon the open prairie without covering of any description. Next morning they started at break of day, and by evening that night were within five miles of their destination. Here they halted until daylight, when they proposed to make the attack.

As the Indians were passing a point north of the buffalo-hunters, on the first day of the journey, a lone scout, in the hills four miles away, seeing so large a moving body —whether buffalo or horsemen he could not tell—galloped down depressions and through ravines until he was near enough to ascertain without being observed what this all meant. He was no other than John Runner, the best scout and trailer in the whole Sioux nation. He had been sent to look for buffalo, and was some twenty miles southwest of the Sioux camp when the horsemen passed him. The Crow village was northwest of the Sioux camp, so that in moving on the agency far to the south, the Crows were two points south by one east, or, as the sailors say, south-southeast. John Runner was secreted in a hollow in the foot-hills when they passed, and was scarcely a half mile away as they swung around the edge of the northern Bad Lands, a different section of Bad Lands from those near the agency.

Imagine his horror when he saw and recognized the medicine-man, Wa-da-ha, his grandfather, leading these Crows on the war-path. A feeling of sickness came over him at first, which quickly changed, in accordance with his Indian nature, to hatred and disgust. He divined instantly the purpose of the expedition, and turning his horse's head, galloped toward the Sioux camp, twenty-five miles away. It was about two o'clock in the afternoon when he started on this journey, and he was a trifle over two hours and twenty minutes in making the trip.

The Sioux were quietly engaged in their various pleasures and pursuits, some gambling, others singing or prac-

ticing with the bow and rifle. Suddenly they saw a horseman coming across the plain in mad haste. Just as he reached them his horse stumbled and fell, throwing his rider several yards in advance. John Runner—for it was he—springing to his feet unhurt, and with his long hair streaming in the breeze, dashed through the village at full speed, crying: "The Crows are marching against our people at the agency! To arms—to your horses! Quick! They will soon be there!" And dashing into the presence of the chiefs, who were smoking their pipes and lolling in the shade of a large tipi, he called out: "The Crows, with one thousand warriors, are marching against our people at the agency! To arms instantly! Call the braves to arms!"

There was a scene of excitement following this announcement which pen cannot picture, and which mind can scarcely conceive. Half a dozen squaws and Indians, beating on tom-toms, with doleful singing, soon brought together all the people in the central square. The chief, addressing the throng, told them what the messenger had seen, and when the names of two of their own people were pronounced as leading these Crow devils to the slaughter of women and children, the indignation that took possession of every man, woman, and child in that entire camp was something terrible to see. In less than an hour about a thousand and five hundred armed warriors, on fleet ponies, were speeding away southward, while the women and children and old men, with a guard of two hundred braves, were hurrying with loads of meat as fast as possible in the wake of the advancing army.

Never, in the history of the Sioux nation, had such a host taken the war-path. The combined forces of the two tribes, led by such chiefs as Sitting Bull, Rain-in-the-face, Gopher, Spotted Tail, Red Cloud, and Two Bears, was enough to inspire every warrior with great courage, and give his arms strength and his eye steadiness for the fray. They rode all that night, and in the morning rested but an hour, in order to allow the horses to eat a little and stretch their stiffened limbs before again taking up the march against the Crows.

CHAPTER VIII.

STRONG HEART AND WANNETA AT THE AGENCY.

THE two days following the departure of the tribe on the annual hunt were spent very quietly at the agency, Wanneta tenderly caring for Strong Heart and giving him such medicine as she thought would hasten his recovery.

The lodges which the Indians had erected were placed upon the banks of a good-sized stream, and were about three hundred yards from the government buildings. The ground between them and the camp was level, and free from underbrush or trees. A few cottonwoods grew on either side of the stream. Its banks were about ten feet high and quite steep; the width of the creek was about one hundred feet, and the water, for some distance, was quiet and deep. There were a few canoes moored at the water's edge, which the natives used when crossing on hunting excursions, or when bringing fire-wood from the drift-piles on the opposite side. The time passed by rapidly, and neither Wanneta nor Strong Heart had any premonition of the danger that awaited them. In blissful ignorance they passed the time as only lovers can, until the very night that the Crows encamped five miles from the agency.

The Sioux, on the morning of this day, after resting their ponies, took up the march again as rapidly as possible, and about dusk halted ten miles north of the agency

to rest a little before advancing to find out whether or not the Crows were in the neighbourhood.

It was a bright evening, and Wanneta and her lover were seated in the dimly-lighted tipi. The escort of braves were lounging in their wigwams, a hundred yards away, smoking their pipes or gambling with little coloured stones. The squaws had prepared food a few moments before, and all had satisfied the cravings of their appetites.

One of the employees of the agency had been out hunting, and on his way home, followed the edge of the water for several miles. The river having cut down into the soil, as we have said, to a considerable depth, a horseman could pass along the verge of the stream and be invisible to any one some distance back upon the prairie. In this way he unconsciously passed fully half of the Crow Indians.

The chiefs had called a consultation before attacking the agency, and were in a group near the edge of the bank, discussing whether they should wait until morning, as was their intention when they arrived at this spot, or push on to the assault that night. The half-breed hunter knew enough of the Crow tongue to understand what they were talking about. So he stopped his horse and listened a few moments. He recognized the voice of one of the principal Crow chiefs; he also, to his great amazement and horror, heard Wa-da-ha, the medicine-man, well known to the agency employees, debating with the hereditary enemies of his nation, as to which was the best way of slaughtering a hundred of his own people. The

half-breed was badly frightened, but becoming bolder as the conversation went on, he decided to listen to all that was said, and if his horse made a sound that should betray him, to leap into the stream, swim across, and escape through the darkness.

Indian-like, his horse was well trained, and the animal, conscious of the presence of strangers, stood patiently waiting, with ears thrown forward, on the alert for any movement his master might make. The half-breed stood with his arm thrown over the horse's neck, his rifle in readiness upon his left arm, and, as he listened, this is what he heard:

"Black Elk is a great chief," said the medicine-man, "but he knows not the Sioux people as well as I do. They are up early in the morning, and will flee into the agency buildings as soon as they catch sight of us. If we make the attack now, they will not have a chance to fly, and we can surround and cut them all down without danger to ourselves."

"The medicine-man speaks wise words," said one of the Crow sub-chiefs; "we will listen to what he has to say."

Spotted Eagle had been standing beside Wa-da-ha, and wishing to take part in the conversation, judging that they were talking about the attack, he nudged the medicine-man and said to him: "Tell them to move on at once and plan to surround the village. The camp is several hundred yards from the agency, and by making a wide detour we can pass the buildings unnoticed and attack the camp and escape with the prisoners and scalps before the agent

can arouse his men." Wa-da-ha made known Spotted Eagle's idea to the Crows. It was favourably received, and all decided to act upon it at once.

"Let us call the young men together," said Black Elk, "and march to the attack." With that he gave a war-whoop, which brought all the warriors around him, mounted on their ponies. At the sound the horse of the half-breed became frightened, and it was with great difficulty that his master could keep him quiet so as to hear what more was said.

"Young men," said the chief, "you are to observe the following instructions: The Indian girl called Wanneta, very beautiful and beloved by this young man, is not to be harmed. She is probably in the lodge of the son of Rain-in-the-face, Strong Heart, who is the treacherous dog who killed many of your people two weeks ago in the Bad Lands, and whom you must take alive, if possible, for torture. When we have returned to our village, you are to respect and reverence our Sioux friends here, who have led us in the attack, as if they were your brother Crows. This elder one is to become one of our medicine-men. Spotted Eagle will become a great warrior with us. It is to them we owe this opportunity of striking a telling blow upon the Sioux dogs; therefore believe and respect them. Now to your horses, and we will advance cautiously." So saying, Black Elk leaped upon his pony and set out at a slow trot across the plain, followed by his warriors.

As they moved on through the falling darkness, they uttered no sound. When within two miles of the agency

the column turned toward the north, to pass far above the buildings, and slackened their speed somewhat in order that any danger of being discovered and having their plans frustrated might be avoided.

Scarcely had the column moved, than the half-breed plunged his horse into the stream, and, holding tightly to the rawhide bridle, swam ahead and directed the animal where to land on the opposite bank. As the last of the Crows were passing the spot, they fancied the wind brought to their ears the sound of a splash in the waters below. Some of them halted their ponies and rode to the edge of the bank. As they peered anxiously into the darkness, they could see no sign of the noble animal and its rider who were to bear the news of their coming to the agency and to the camp before their diabolical work could commence.

Reaching the shore in safety, the half-breed sprang on the animal's back, and, with lash vigourously applied, flew over the plain as fast as his pony could bear him. In an incredibly short time he reached a point opposite the camp, and plunging his froth and foam flecked steed into the water, swam through the depths to the other side, where he scrambled up the steep bank to the plain above. Leaving his horse, heaving and panting, he rushed into the village and called the braves about him.

"The Crows are coming with many warriors. Take your rifles and carry the wounded man to the agency building without delay. Do not waste a moment. Run, run, instantly," and catching up his own rifle, the half-breed rushed toward the tipi where lay Strong Heart,

followed by all the men in the village. They gathered up the buffalo robes, on which the young man lay, by the four corners, and hastily running to the agency store, rushed pell-mell into it with their burden.

While they were doing this, Wanneta and the other women hurriedly gathered a few pounds of dried beef, and with the children that were in the small village, followed on their heels. As soon as they reached the buildings, the employees, some six or eight in number, and the agent himself, attracted by the noise, came running out to see what was the matter. It did not take him long to understand the condition of affairs. He gave instructions that Strong Heart should be carried up-stairs—the main building of the agency was two stories high—and laid on the floor of a room having but one small window. Fifteen of the warriors he stationed at the small block-house, at a point which commanded three sides of the buildings, and the remaining Sioux, with his own men, he placed in various positions at doors, windows, and loop-holes within the warehouse and the dwelling.

The women and children were sent into the cellar, with the exception of some of the bravest, who were left above with plenty of calico and linen to bind up the wounds of any that might be hurt. The great gates of the agency were shut and fastened, the doors and windows of all the buildings locked and barred, the agent rolled out a keg of fine rifle-powder, and set three of the squaws to loading empty shells, so that they should not run short of ammunition, in case they had to withstand a long attack. He brought up several hundred bags of cartridges and

distributed them among the men, and laid a dozen brand-new Winchesters in various parts of the house, within the reach of those who were to defend the women and children. When all this was done, they felt quite safe as to the probable result of the attack, thinking that the half-breed had greatly exaggerated the number of the enemy.

The main body of the Sioux did not rest more than an hour, and as the Crows were advancing from the north-west, they were coming from the north; but the Sioux had ten miles to come and were proceeding very leisurely, while the Crows had about five miles to come and were trotting their horses.

The Crows passed without being seen or heard, a mile above the buildings, and, swinging around, came gradually in toward the deserted village. They approached from the eastward very cautiously. Nearly a hundred of them dismounted, and, advancing on all fours, crawled to a part of it nearest the agency, while others surrounded the tipis fringing the stream. All drew from their belts their scalping-knifes and tomahawks, and, upon a war-whoop from the chief, sprang through the entrance of each lodge with uplifted knife and hatchet, ready to brain those supposed to be lying inside.

Just as the village was surrounded, the moon, which had been hidden behind a heavy bank of clouds, came out in all its brightness and shed a penetrating light upon the scene. Imagine the disgust of the Indians to find their intended victims gone. Not a soul was there, and all that was left for them to wreak their vengeance on, were

several curs which ran howling hither and thither, dodging the vicious thrusts of knife or strike of tomahawk from the exasperated Indians.

"Ah," said the medicine-man to a crowd of assembled warriors, "some one has heard of our coming and has led the Sioux into the agency. We will get them yet. Come on; follow me. I will lead you to the attack." There was murmuring among the Crows, and some openly avowed that he had led them into a trap; but as everything in the wigwams betokened a hasty flight, and as the crafty old fellow used his most persuasive eloquence, he soon induced them to follow his lead.

"They shall not escape me," he hissed. "I will get them and deliver them into your hands. You shall have blood and scalps, to pay you for the wrongs which have been perpetrated upon your nation. Come, oh Crows, follow me to victory."

Wa-da-ha leaped upon his pony's back, and followed closely by Spotted Eagle, the chiefs and head warriors, while the others trailed along in the rear, dashed toward the government buildings. The trampling of so many horses made considerable noise, and seeing that further concealment was impossible, the Crows raised their war-whoop, and dividing into two parties, swung around, the one behind and the other in front of the agency.

Those within could see by the bright moonlight what an enormous host they had to contend with, and the stoutest hearts quailed as they saw that they were outnumbered thirty to one. The Crows, too, they saw had nearly as good arms as they themselves, and the only

thing that could save them would be the arrival of troops or the coming of their people from the buffalo hunt.

The agent saw that he and his men were in very tight quarters, and doubted whether, with such an army surrounding him, he could get a message to the nearest military post. He did not know whether to attempt to send a scout or not, and resolved to wait until a consultation could be held.

As the Crows were cavorting about the buildings, hooting and yelling, and discharging their rifles, the agent called up the women from the cellar, and sending with them a number of men, gave instructions that windows and doors be doubly barricaded. The buildings were very strongly put together, and were of very heavy timber. They could, therefore, resist any number of bullets, but were not at all fire-proof. The three, and the block-house, which have been repeatedly mentioned, were connected; that is, built end to end, so that a person could pass from one to the other without being seen. The last building was the lowest, but the broadest, being square. It was composed entirely of logs. This was the block-house, or fort, and was so strongly built, the ends of the logs being dovetailed, that no Indian could batter it down. The loop-holes commanded the structure from all sides, and it was not possible for the Crows to advance upon it without great loss.

The warehouse, in which was the meat and meal, was at the north. The store and the apartments in which the agent lived adjoined this. The next building was occupied by the employees of the agency; then came the

block-house. The meat on hand consisted of some seven or eight hundred shoulders and sides of hogs. This was to be issued to the Indians in case the beef supply, for some unforeseen reason, should fail. As this was salted and cured, it was very hard and dry, and while a bullet would pass through seven or eight inches, a barrier of meat a foot thick would afford sufficient resistance to stop any bullet.

The squaws and a few of the men worked with the superhuman strength that excitement and danger alone give, and it was not many moments before every door and window from the north end of the buildings to the south was strengthened with this novel but effective barricade of pork. There were plenty of kegs of meal which might have been used, but the agent considered the salt pork better.

The Crows did not leave the defenders in doubt long as to what their intentions were. The high board fence which surrounded all, and which, while tolerably strong, was by no means bullet-proof, was not an obstacle worthy of consideration; still it hindered them from obtaining a clear view of the first story of the buildings. So at a given signal five or six hundred Crows dismounted, rushed to it, each seized a board, and pulled and tugged together, thus tearing down and carrying off in large sections all of the fence and the gates. This surprised the defenders, and although it rendered them somewhat uneasy, did not alarm them, as the fence was of no value as a protection. The defenders simultaneously opened a rapid fire, and had the satisfaction of seeing a number of

the warriors stagger and fall, many of whom were unable to rise, and had to be carried off the field by their comrades.

The agent ordered the braves and his men to shoot all Indians who came as near as the dark line upon the ground which marked the spot where the fence had stood. So they waited with cocked rifles the approach of the Crows to the dead-line. The Indians had heaped the remains of the fence in a large pile, and setting fire to it, soon had the whole mass in a roaring flame. They could not resist the temptation of executing a small war-dance about the bright blaze, and having done this, returned to the attack with renewed spirits and redoubled energies. The agent looked on complacently as his fence was being burned, and when asked how he felt about it, remarked, with the usual carelessness of his class, that it was Uncle Sam's money that paid for the fence, and that he did not care what became of it.

The Crows formed a ring of about a hundred yards from the agency buildings, and circling around and around, their horses on a dead run, discharged their rifles as they rode. When the horses became tired, those who had been waiting took their places while the first set rested. Thus they kept up an incessant fire. The only effect of this was to fill the strong and heavy weather-boarding full of lead. Perhaps a few bullets entered some crack or crevice and buried themselves in the walls or in the piles of meat about the loop-holes, but there was no damage done whatever.

It did not take the Crows many minutes to see that

their bullets made no impression upon the buildings, and that those inside were emptying their saddles and sending their best braves to the happy hunting-grounds at an alarming rate. So they withdrew to the fire and devised new tactics. They left the ponies in charge of some fifty braves and on foot stormed the doors and tried to batter them down. They selected for this purpose two heavy posts taken from the fence, and put each in the hands of a dozen of their strongest men, who went on a quick run at the door.

The besieged saw them coming, and were somewhat alarmed at the aspect affairs were now taking. The agent called out loudly to open fire rapidly upon them. As the Crows approached with their battering-rams and crossed the dead-line, they received a shower of bullets which killed five or six of each set. One of the parties dropped the log and took to their heels; the other came right on, a man falling every now and then, but reached the door with four of their number unhurt. They struck it twice, but were too excited to hit hard enough to break it down. Two of them were shot on the door-step, and the other two, losing all heart, turned and ran swiftly to where their companions were watching. Black Elk then told his braves to try the white man's way of firing, and to aim all together very carefully at the loop-holes. This they did, discharging their arms simultaneously. A thousand rifles fired as one had the effect of bringing the Sioux from the north all the more rapidly as this thunderous report reached their ears, but it killed three of those within and wounded four.

As the sound reached the ears of the Sioux, Sitting Bull and Rain-in-the-face, who were riding in front, lashed their ponies into a furious speed, and calling to their followers, who needed no second bidding, came on to the agency. Nearer and nearer they drew, until they could plainly hear the war-cries of the Crows. So intent were the latter upon the new mode of assault, that they did not know of the approach of the Sioux until they were close upon them.

The Crows had tried for some time to set fire to the buildings, and some of their best bow-men had been shooting arrows, headed with red-hot coals, at the roofs. Out of some fifteen or twenty shots, three of the brands kindled a space upon the dry roofs of the north and central buildings. One of the besieged sprang up to put out the fire, but fell back with a bullet through his head. At least five hundred rifles were directed toward the blaze, and, had any one shown himself, instant death would have been his fate. The fire gained rapidly, and those within knew that over their heads an enemy was working which would soon drive them forth, an enemy against which they could not fight with either rifle or knife. Two more brave fellows within sprang up to make another attempt. Both fell back, one shot in three places and the other fairly riddled with lead. Just as smoke was pouring into the upper stories of the building—so dense that Strong Heart had to be removed to the lower floor—there came a sound which was heard above the roar of repeating arms, and which sent a thrill of gladness through the heart of every one within those doomed

walls. It was the Sioux war-whoop, and as it rang out, bringing gladness to one side and sorrow and chagrin to the other, those who uttered it dashed into sight, and charged without an instant's pause.

Now ensued a fight in the open plain, in which a thousand Crows, stung to exasperation by their failure to carry the fort, furiously assailed fifteen hundred Sioux. The horses of both parties were tired, and it was a question of a few moments only before one or the other should give way, for Indians will seldom fight in the open plain. After the first few charges the lines drew apart, and a steady fire was kept up on both sides for fifteen or twenty minutes. The moon became obscured in clouds for a time, so that the aim of both parties was very uncertain, and they could not tell whether they were directing their rifles at their enemies or not. So there was a lull in the fight until each should be able to see. In a few moments the moon shone out in all its brightness, and, without waiting further, the Sioux raised their battle-cry and charged the Crows.

The line wavered an instant and then broke, and with loud "ki-yis," the defeated Crows fled toward their own village, pursued by nearly a thousand of the most fleet of the Sioux. A number were killed in the pursuit, but as the horses of the victors were worn out after their long run, hardly five miles had been traversed before most of the animals showed signs of fatigue, and gradually, one after another dropped out of the race and returned to the agency.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SCENE AT THE AGENCY.

WHEN the Sioux swept down and charged the Crows with a war-whoop of such volume and strength that it seemed to almost shake the heavens, the delight of those inside the little fortress could scarcely be expressed in words. They danced, they shouted, and carried on almost like crazy people. It was only a few moments before they saw what would be the result of the fight, so all in the fort and in the northern building brought their guns and ammunition and joined the men and women crowded in the agent's house. A scene was enacted here that beggars description. Every one was so rejoiced to see the Crows in full retreat, and to know that there would be no massacre and no captivity, that they went through all sorts of antics.

As soon as the enemy were in full retreat, the Sioux crowded around the buildings and called to those inside to come out. The doors were thrown open, and every one within the burning building ran into the plain. Six strong braves bore in advance of the crowd the litter upon which lay Strong Heart. This they carried out some little distance and set down in a place of safety. The people having thus escaped, the agent called to the Sioux to dismount, and some two hundred men worked with might and main to save what they could of the contents

of the houses. The fire had gained such headway on the roof, and was fanned by so stiff a breeze, that there was no possibility of saving any of the houses. The barn and wagon-shed, after being rifled of their contents and the horses there stabled, had also been fired by the Crows.

The Indians worked as hard as they could, and carried all the household provisions and pork safely outside the burning buildings. When this was done, the agent and his assistants had to stand idly by and watch the devouring flames. There was nothing for him to do but to send to the nearest railroad and telegraph station an account of what had happened, and to notify the authorities at Washington to send instructions and money for the erection of new buildings, and the purchase of horses and other necessary commodities. The Indians found their village undisturbed by the Crows, and, by crowding and sleeping six or seven in a tipi, managed to furnish the agent and his wife and employees with several lodges until better accommodations could be secured.

The flames mounting high in air, made such a brilliant light that people fifty miles away saw, by the red haze, that something unusual had happened. The Crows, looking back far distant on their homeward race, saw it, too, and gave vent to their delight in war-whoops and yells as they sped across the prairie. The Indians and whites watched until nothing remained but masses of bright red coals. Then, as it was late at night, they turned in. A guard of a hundred warriors was left to watch the provisions. They spent their time in dancing about the fire and keeping up a series of songs, now and

then interspersed with a few war-like demonstrations, such as shouts and yells. They helped themselves very liberally to the pork, and many a shoulder and piece of bacon was devoured after being first cooked over the embers.

When the first volley was fired by the Crows as they rode around the buildings, Wanneta, who had left her charge for a few moments to get a bucket of water and speak with those down-stairs, rushed up in great alarm and sat down by the side of her lover, answering his questions and listening with great agitation to the sounds of attack. At first Strong Heart was very anxious to go below and assist, and when the building was fired and they carried him down, it was all Wanneta could do to prevent him from getting up, weak as he was, and joining in the defense. Strong Heart, like all Indian young men, could not bear to see a fight in which his own people were engaged without lending them his assistance. Indians have been known to fight when terribly wounded, and there are cases on record where braves who have been cut and shot a number of times, have sat up with their back propped against a tree or a dead horse, loading and firing their rifles for several hours. The same stoicism was displayed by many soldiers in the late war for the Union.

As the fight went on, and the Crows were circling on their fast flying ponies around and around the buildings, Wanneta and Strong Heart sat perfectly still for some time, listening to the dull thud of the hoofs upon the turf and the yells of those within and without. The discharge

of the rifles was so rapid that they did not feel at all afraid, nor were they in the least bit nervous. When one is in a building and there is a fight outside or below, and the shooting is very active, one is not apt to be half so badly frightened as if there were an occasional discharge. In the first case one is nerved to see or hear almost anything; in the other, one listens with bated breath for each report, and thus the imagination, having full sway during the pause, is inflamed by the nervous and excitable condition of the mind.

As the fight grew hot, those inside cheered and yelled in answer to those without. Every once in a while a bullet would smash through a glass window, and another, with a dull zip, would bury itself in the stacks of meat behind. The patter of the lead striking the heavy weather-boarding, indicated to the young folk that a very heavy fire was being directed against them.

"Wanneta," said Strong Heart, after the shooting had been continued for about fifteen minutes, "I think we are perfectly safe here, unless they set fire to the buildings. In case they do this, there is no hope for us whatever."

"If they do set fire to the building," said Wanneta, "the men can run up on the roof and extinguish the blaze before it has gained much headway."

"No, they can't," said Strong Heart, "because every Crow will watch that blaze, keeping his rifle turned toward it, and the life of the first man who shows himself will not be worth an old pony."

Wanneta groaned when she heard this, but, as there

was no indication of the building being fired, she kept her usual composure. She gave Strong Heart a drink of water and, leaving him for a few moments, ran down-stairs to see how the defenders were getting along. The lamps in the agency had been lighted at first, but as they interfered with the men's aim, they had been turned down or blown out, and each man handled his gun in comparative darkness, the moonlight outside enabling him to direct his fire with considerable accuracy. While Wanneta was talking to the women, the Crows ceased their circling about the agency, and advanced and tore down the fence, as before described, and tried to batter in the door.

Pulling off the boards and wrenching apart the cross-pieces made considerable noise. Strong Heart, hearing it, called out loudly for Wanneta. She ran up and joined him, to tell him what was being done, and then went down-stairs again. After the unsuccessful attempt to batter down the door, the Crows charged in a body against the building, and shot many arrows with live coals attached, or threw blazing brands on the roof. Wanneta, looking out through a small crack, saw what was being done, and, with a despairing cry, ran up-stairs to tell her lover. As this charge was made, the besieged fired all the cartridges in the magazines of their guns in rapid succession. The Crows were so near that their aim was very effective. They were compelled to withdraw precipitately.

"Strong Heart," said Wanneta, "your fears were well founded, for these devils have set fire to the roof. As I

was down-stairs I saw fifteen or twenty arrows and blazing brands directed against our fort. It is not possible that among so many all should fail to do the fearful work for which they were designed. In case the roof catches fire, we will stay up here as long as we can and then go down. The men below will try to put the fire out."

There was a rough plastering on laths against the rafters of the roof, the room being in this way made very high and spacious. There was no attic or garret. So that if a blaze should start, it would burn very little before it would be detected by our friends underneath.

"If the roof does catch fire," said Strong Heart, "you must let me take my rifle and fight with the men. I will do it. I will not be shut up and die like a coward. I will get outside and die like a man."

"You must not do that, Strong Heart. Please do not go out—do not leave, for my sake, unless we see that we are to be roasted alive. Then we will run for the river, but not until then."

Strong Heart lay still for a few moments, for he did not want to join his companions unless Wanneta wished. Had there been no one there to plead with him to stay, or had there been some one whom he did not love, he probably would have gone below and fought with the rest. He would not have shown weakness, even though his arm and shoulder greatly pained him; he would have loaded and fired with his right arm, and shut his teeth with the grit characteristic of his people, and would have been the last to complain. Wanneta sat by his side, and

did not speak for some time. The noise of the conflict drowned the crackling noise that was becoming louder above, and it was not until a loud snap was heard and a piece of plaster fell from the pointed ceiling to the floor that anything unusual was noticed. Then they could see small flames plying their destructive work in the lath and rafters exposed by the falling plaster. There was no longer any doubt that the building was on fire.

The flames spread along the ridge with great speed, and every few seconds another piece of plaster fell to the floor, exposing more of the fire. It was only a few moments before the smoke from above settled down nearly to them. They could remain on the second floor but a short time longer. Wanneta rushed to the stairs and called to the men below. Two of them obeyed her summons, and came running up with buckets of water. One rushed up the ladder, opened the skylight, and was about to step upon the roof, when, with a loud shriek, he fell twenty feet to the floor beneath, shot through the head. Not wishing her lover to see more of this, Wanneta ran to the steep stairs and called again for assistance. Four strong men came quickly, and, at her request, carried Strong Heart down to a safer place. Going to a dark corner of the room, they laid his bed upon the floor, and then returned to their posts of duty.

Wanneta threw herself by his side, and, until the glad sound of the Sioux war-whoop was heard, did not leave him.

"Dear Strong Heart," she said, "do not leave your bed unless the building burns so far that we cannot stay

here longer. Then take your rifle, and give me the rifle of the man killed up-stairs, and we will all run for the river, take the canoes, and get across to a place of safety."

"Wanneta, let me get up; I cannot stand it here. I hear the death-song of several Crows outside. Let me get out—I must join in the fight;" and as he concluded, he raised himself to a sitting position, and stretched out his right hand for his rifle, which they had placed by his side to be used should the Crows enter the fort. Wanneta saw that prompt measures would alone prevent him from carrying out his intentions; so throwing both arms around his neck, she held him fast, and in doing so, hurt his shoulder so that he almost cried out with pain. She pushed him back gently, and made him lie down upon the soft buffalo and bear robes. Then she held his right arm with both hands and prevented him from again rising, and pleaded with all her might. By her efforts and her pleading, she managed to keep him on his back.

"Strong Heart, you told me at the old village that you loved me, and I believe it; but if you get up and go out, unless it is necessary, I will not believe you—I will not trust you." This made him a little angry, for he took it differently from what she had anticipated. He replied instantly: "If the Sioux nation is in danger it is my duty to aid them, and although I may be suffering from a slight wound, it is no reason why I should lie idly by and let the brothers of my own nation pour out their heart's blood in order that I may escape. No! I am the son of Rain-in-the-face, the greatest Sioux chief that ever lived,

and I will conduct myself as becomes the son of Rain-in-the-face, and will not act the coward.

"I will lie here, Wanneta, until the last moment, and if the roof burns and falls, I will charge with the rest and with you and make a great attempt to reach the other side of the river." There was a few moments of silence after this, the lovers listening to the sounds of the rifles, the cries of the besiegers and the besieged. Presently, Strong Heart said: "Come close to my side, dear friend," —she had run to the front to see what was the matter, and was standing a few feet away when he spoke. At his bidding, she came and sat down close to him.

"Wanneta," said he, "when I told you that I loved you, I meant every word I said. Were you in earnest when you said you loved me in return?"

"I was," she said, "and because I wanted to keep you here upon your couch is the reason I said I would not love you if you went out to fight. It is because I think so much of you and hold you so dear that I do not want to lose you, or have you fall into the hands of those revengeful Crow dogs."

"Wanneta, I believe every word you say, and know that your love for me is as deep as is that of any woman for man. I think that I had better speak further upon this matter, because, if I have to go out to the fight, I do not know what will become of me or what will become of you. If we leave together, we may both escape, or one of us may be killed and the other left; therefore, I wish to make a very strange request, and want to know if you will promise me you will carry it out. You know,

if they see that I am wounded, they will capture me alive. That means death by slow torture. For you, capture means marriage to some Crow warrior whom you do not love, and who will be a very harsh master to you; therefore, I want you, dear Wanneta, to make an agreement with me similar to that which we made the day at the cliffs when we had such a narrow escape. If they come to take me, and I am wounded or fallen and you are there, take this knife"—and he gave her the same hunting-knife that he carried the day they were in the Bad Lands—"and with it run me to the heart, and then yourself. If I am not so badly wounded, and can handle weapons, I will plunge this knife into the heart of my captor, and then will end both our lives. Should we both be disarmed, and unable to escape a worse fate than death, then I will die at the stake, as should a brave Sioux; you must, in that case, look out for yourself."

"That is too horrible, Strong Heart. Do not talk that way. I will take this knife, as you wish, but I will not use it unless we can signal each other with our eyes, if captured, and agree as to what we shall do."

"Well, so be it," said Strong Heart; "we will not use the knife unless by your eyes I see you give consent, then for the worst."

"Suppose this trouble all passes by and we escape?" said Wanneta.

"Then," said Strong Heart, "will come one of the happiest moments of my life. Then we shall be safe, for our people will leave us a guard of several hundred warriors, and they will not make the hunt very

long, but will go on the war-path against the Crows, who have caused all this trouble. There is yet another thing that I must speak of before more moments pass, as there is no telling what may happen in the next few hours.

"You told me that you loved me, Wanneta, and I believe you. Now I want to know if you will love me still further,"—and here he raised himself again to a sitting posture and supporting himself with his right arm, while she instinctively drew near and tenderly laid him against her breast—"I want to know if you will become my squaw. You know I am well able to care for you; you know how much I think of you, and all that I would do for you. Will you consent to this, dear Wanneta, as soon as I am well and strong again?"

An instant's pause, a little hesitation on the part of the Indian girl, and then, as does every woman whose heart is touched by true love, she said, "Yes."

Just then the men came down from above, and announced that three of their number had been shot in trying to put out the fire. Those in the little fortress who had been most brave and reckless turned pale. The white men tightened their belts, and nerved themselves to meet the worst. The Indians became desperate, and, for about five minutes, all fired as fast as they could cram cartridges into the magazines of their rifles in the endeavour to drive back the red-skins. These had seen the advance of the fire, and knowing that it would, sooner or later, drive out those within, gathered around, waiting for what seemed to them their certain prey.

Just as matters were getting at their worst, and the men were beginning to be blinded by smoke, and to talk of making a charge for the river, in hopes of thus escaping, there rang out upon the air the well-known Sioux war-whoop.

Many times, upon the desert, a lonely traveller who has been wending his wearisome journey, day after day, across sandy wastes, sees far ahead, dimly outlined against the sky, the palm-tree, sure sign of springing waters and the rest of an oasis. He quickens his step, his heart is light, his eye re-kindles, and his whole aspect is changed. So with these dejected and desperate men. When the sound of the war-cry of their nation rang out, it brought to them gladness and the promise of escape. They all cheered in return, but, on account of the great racket outside, of course were not heard. They stopped firing, for fear of hurting their own countrymen. They gathered at the doors and windows, and peered out of the little port-holes to see what was happening. The moon came out very bright for the next ten minutes, and they could discern everything almost as well as if all these doings had been going on by daylight.

They saw the Sioux, several hundred more in number than the Crows, dashing on to the fray, led by Rain-in-the-face and Sitting Bull, warriors whose prowess was unequalled. On swept the Sioux leaders, followed by warriors eager for blood, eager for fight. Every one had thrown down his blanket, his bread-sack—everything but his weapons. They charged the Crows at once, and as they wheeled off to the right, delivered a most sting-

ing fire. Some of them fired under their horses' necks, others over, while not a few, to show in what contempt they held the fighting powers of the Crows, sat bolt-upright and discharged their rifles without protection. The result you know. The Crows fled, and the field belonged to the Sioux. The young braves began to scalp the slain, while the chiefs rushed to the agency buildings, and pounding upon the doors, loudly called to those within to open and come out.

It did not take the Indians long to congratulate each other upon their escape. Indians are not given to many embraces nor to the shedding of tears. Their stolidity of nature will not permit them to indulge in what they regard as foolishness.

Rain-in-the-face, having ascertained that his son was safe, took Sitting Bull by the arm and led him to Strong Heart's side, where he had been laid in a place of safety by the young men. He had told Sitting Bull before of Strong Heart's bravery in killing so many Crows. Sitting Bull, usually stern, ferocious, and bloodthirsty, paid the young man a compliment which is worthy of being recorded here.

"Strong Heart, son of Rain-in-the-face, you have showed that you are rightly named. If I had one thousand young men like you, I would drive the Long Knives out of our hunting-grounds forever. Young man, if your enemies ever injure you again, the whole nation will avenge you."

Those of the Sioux who had been killed, were placed in an empty tipi and watched over by two squaws, who

kept up a moaning and dismal singing all night long. After this was done, some of the Indians and the agent, together with his family, turned in at the little village for the night, but the greater part of them camped upon the plain, with no covering save the canopy of heaven.

CHAPTER X.

WA-DA-HA AND SPOTTED EAGLE IN A TIGHT PLACE.

WA-DA-HA and Spotted Eagle were with the foremost Crows in the flight, for they well knew the fate that was in store for them, should they be taken by their own people. Therefore, as the Sioux pursued, they whipped their ponies and made them gallop as fast as the tired steeds could, in a desperate effort to escape.

Occasionally they heard the well-known war-whoop in the rear, signifying to them that a Crow, whose horse was unable to keep up, had fallen. But as these sounds grew fainter and fainter as the night wore away, they soon gained courage, and trusted that their escape was certain. They rode side by side, a little in advance of the Crows, for some distance and, after the sounds of pursuit had died away, let their panting animals lower their gait to a slow walk. Thus they proceeded for a number of miles, when they stopped and encamped for the rest of the night. As they rode along together, both in moody silence, they thought how desperate was their situation, and wondered whether the Crows would wreak their vengeance upon them for proposing an assault which had resulted so disastrously to the attacking party.

Wa-da-ha did not care much how affairs went; he had

lost his position in his own tribe, and he knew well that the chances were greatly against his being adopted into the Crow nation as a medicine-man. As he thought over these things, he hardened his heart and, crushing down any feelings of fear which may have arisen for the moment, nerved himself to meet whatever the future should bring, whether of good or evil.

Spotted Eagle was more of a coward than the medicine-man, and as he rode along, he thought of the foolish and desperate step he had taken. Although outwardly he showed no signs of a tormented mind and uneasy conscience, yet inwardly he suffered intensely. He was not as bad as many young Indians, for, although reckless and dissipated, the only really serious crime that could be brought against him was his late treachery. As the young man thought it over, the question came to him as it had to the medicine-man, What will the Crows do with us now that they have been defeated? Turning to his companion, he asked, "Oh, great Wa-da-ha, tell me what shall we do to pacify the Crows. They are riding a little in our rear, and I can hear from their mutterings that they are very angry over their defeat, and that they lay it to us."

"Young man," said Wa-da-ha, "the only thing that will pull us through this scrape will be nerve and grit. If I thought the Sioux did not know of our share in the business, we would escape to-night and go back to their camp; but as they came in such large numbers, all painted and ready for fight, I think they must have learned of our intended attack through a scout. Or they

may have seen us as we passed around the Bad Lands; therefore, I prefer to take chances with the Crows, rather than return to the village and be put to death by my own people. If we were only certain that they did not know of our doings, we could return in safety."

"Well, medicine-man," said Spotted Eagle, "suppose you get off your horse and let me lead him. Then do you creep back to where the Crows are. When within a hundred yards, rise, turn, and walk ahead of them for some little distance, so as to hear, if possible, what they think of our conduct in this affair. If they are in favour of making us prisoners, the best thing that we can do is to go back to the Sioux, and run the risk of their having discovered our part in the attack."

"Young man," said Wa-da-ha, "I will do as you say; but I want you to understand that, if we are separated, we must each stand up for the other in deed and in speech, and that if one of us is taken captive by the Sioux, he is not to tell anything that will criminate the other."

"I agree," said Spotted Eagle.

"Then," said the medicine-man, "lead my horse; I will rejoin you presently."

Slipping from the pony's back, he ran several hundred yards toward the rear, until within hearing distance of the Crows. He gained this position without being noticed by taking advantage of the little darkness caused by the moon passing through a great mass of clouds. Wa-da-ha heard Black Elk and some of the warriors talking very earnestly together, and all that they said was

wafted by a gentle breeze in his direction, so that not one word of the conversation did he lose.

"No, Black Elk; the young men are very clamorous for the death of these two Sioux. They have, it is true, taken us to the agency and fulfilled their part of the contract, but we did not find a hundred women, children, and old men alone, as they said we would. We found a garrison of men, who poured a destructive fire into our ranks. How was it that the Sioux came in just at the right moment and charged us, if these bad men had not sent word to them of our movements?"

The chief thought a moment, and then replied: "I do not think that they meant to lead us into ambush. I think we were seen when we passed the Bad Lands by some scout from the Sioux party, who reported his discovery. I think, from what these men say, they have been greatly wronged by their tribe, and that they left seeking vengeance upon the chief and his son in retaliation for insults and injuries. I should deem it advisable to watch them both closely until we reach our village. Let us then take them into the council, question them closely, and send word by a messenger, with a peace-pipe in his hand, to the Sioux reservation. If the Sioux say that the men are traitors to them, we will spare them, and adopt them into the tribe, as agreed. If the Sioux say that these men are friends of theirs, we will kill them."

"Well," cried one of the warriors, "the Sioux may send back word that these men are friends of theirs, and loyal to Rain-in-the-face, in order to get them for punishment at home."

"No," said Black Elk; "they will not do that. If the men are traitors, and tried to betray the women and children left at the agency, they will be only too glad to have them put to death here. You see, if they should propose to torture them at home, some relatives would intercede, and want them spared on conditions. The warriors and head men know that they could scarcely dare to overrule the wishes of these friends. The head men and the chief will want to mete out vengeance and make an example of them. Therefore, they would rather have the prisoners meet their richly-deserved fate at the hands of the Crows, than have them escape any punishment.

"Now, my brothers and warriors, listen. Bind these two as soon as they reach our village, so they cannot escape. Send a trusty messenger who speaks their tongue, with a pipe of peace, to the Sioux nation, and find out what they have to say with reference to them. We shall reach our village some time day after to-morrow, and as soon as we get there, I will give orders for the binding of the two men, and will start the messenger on his journey."

"Well said, chief," cried the first warrior; "it shall be as you wish."

The medicine-man, having heard enough to make his ears tingle, and to cause even his strong knees to tremble, ran quickly ahead to Spotted Eagle, and made known to him the whole of the conversation.

"What shall we do?" said the young man, anxiously.

"Well," said the medicine-man, "we dare not try to escape now, for they are wrought up to such a pitch that

they will shoot us at once if they suspect us of such an idea. I think the chances may be more in our favour when we reach the village, so we had better go quietly there."

"Cannot we make a dash for it, Wa-da-ha? Couldn't we go to our people, and make them believe that we have done nothing wrong?"

"No, young man," said Wa-da-ha, "if we foolishly attempt to escape, we shall be killed without doubt. Go quietly on to the village and bide your time."

A few moments after this talk had taken place, three Crows trotted up to where the Sioux were, and told them that Black Elk had given orders that all should encamp for the night, and that under no circumstances should either Spotted Eagle or the medicine-man leave camp without first speaking to the chief. Then the Crows picketed their ponies and, lying down upon the ground, told them to prepare for the night's rest. These Crows were virtually a guard appointed by the chief to watch the Sioux, and see that they did not escape. Early the next morning the march was resumed, and continued until dark. Another night was spent on the plain, and about noon of the next day the warriors entered the village which they had left in such glad spirits and with such certainty of success. The women, children, and old men crowded out to see them enter, and to hear what had been their fortune in the fight.

The bodies of the slain had been carried, according to Indian custom, upon the backs of the ponies, and the injured had been brought on rough litters, strapped between

two ponies. At the sight of so many dead and wounded, the squaws set up a mournful wail, and each rushed forward to see if her husband or relative had been among those who had fallen in the fight. While this scene was taking place, and the women were crying and weeping over the bodies of the dead, a very different scene was going on near the great council-house. The prisoners—for such they now were—had been closely watched all the morning, and when the whole nation had gathered at the council-house, both Wa-da-ha and Spotted Eagle were seized and, in spite of expostulations, had their hands securely bound behind them, and were forced to enter the lodge. The chief stood up amidst a profound silence and directed two of his swiftest messengers to take the best ponies in the tribe, selecting those that had not been fatigued by the long march, and go as quickly as possible to the Sioux nation, bearing each a pipe of peace. There they were to learn what was the feeling toward the medicine-man and Spotted Eagle. Having charged them what they should say to the Sioux, the chief ordered them to leave without delay, and as they rode out of the camp, he produced the council-pipe and, having lighted it, passed it around to all the head warriors present. No council would be complete, and no ceremony considered properly enacted, without the use of the pipe. It is as essential to the Indian as the reading of the Scriptures in a church service would be to us.

The messengers were expected to ride all that day and night, and to arrive at the Sioux camp shortly after daylight the second morning. They were to start on the re-

turn trip about three hours after reaching the village, and should their horses hold out, would be back at the Crow camp about two or three o'clock of the third morning after leaving. The chief very gravely opened the debate, and for one of no legal education his arguments were certainly very strong, his rulings excellent, and the decisions arrived at as good as those of our average lawyer.

Addressing the people assembled, he stated in as few words as possible the case before them, and before speaking, asked of each that he should first listen to what he had to say and then give his own views. Black Elk then went on to say that the two men had kept the agreement made with the Crows, but that on account of their defeat the young braves were very clamorous for the death of both, for they reasoned that it was evident that the Sioux had led them into a trap. This argument the chief claimed could be easily refuted. The prisoners would hardly have dared return with them, but would have gone over to the Sioux in the attack, had they been decoys. Since the Crows had been defeated, it showed all the more clearly to his mind that the men were innocent. Had they not been innocent, they would have thrown off all pretense and joined their own people as soon as the charge was made.

Each one of the chiefs made a speech, giving his views of the case. There were so many who wanted to talk, and some had so much to say, that it was well into the night before the council was ended. The drift of opinion of the older people was in favour of adopting the medicine-man and Spotted Eagle into the tribe.

Upon the adjournment of the council, the Sioux were led to the same tipi which they had occupied before starting upon the expedition, and were given quarters there. Three of the Crows watched them that night. The next day there was no council held. But at seven o'clock in the evening one was called, to last all night, if necessary, or until the messengers returned from the Sioux nation. The Indians had fortified themselves for this council by eating large quantities of meat during the day-time.

The same line of argument was taken up here as at the previous one, and there was little said to interest the reader during the early part of the assembly. But as the hour of midnight drew near, the speeches became more animated. Many persons who had been sleeping, aroused themselves and crowded into the room to hear the debate and to learn what the Sioux people said concerning the prisoners. The medicine-man was not allowed to speak for himself until shortly before midnight, when, in response to many calls for him, the chief caused his arms to be loosed and, giving him a place to stand where all should see and hear, commanded him to say on.

"Friends of the Crow nation," began Wa-da-ha, "I appear before you not as I should have liked to have come. This young man, Spotted Eagle, and myself have been taken and bound by your people because they imagine that we have tried to betray you into the hands of the Sioux. When first I came to your village some days ago, I was promised power and safety, should I lead an attack upon a hundred women and children who were settled

temporarily at the agency, while their own people were away on a buffalo hunt. I led your people in this attack. I did not know that any Sioux other than those whom we expected to attack were near. There was no man more surprised than I to see them, and since that time, in thinking the matter over, it has occurred to me that we must have been observed when we were passing the Bad Lands.

"Now, the point that I wish to impress upon you is the same that your chief has already raised. Would I betray my own nation and come here and live with you without reward? No! I want reward. If I were a spy and trying to betray you, would I live in your own town, would I have returned from the attack with you, instead of joining my own brothers as soon as they came in sight? What I have done should prove to you conclusively that I have acted in perfectly good faith. Now, then, why am I bound; why do you not untie me? This young man and myself are innocent of having done you any wrong. We tried in every way to make the attack a success; we knew not what would be the outcome, and had we not been molested by the Sioux, we should have swept out of existence all those who were hid in the agency buildings, and should have taken many scalps. Do not blame us for the defeat. We could not help it.

"In a few hours your young men from the Sioux people will be here. Then you will know whether I told you the truth or not, and you will learn from them that I gave up everything I held dear, in order that I might have revenge upon my enemies among my own people.

Having learned this, I will then ask you if you are honourable Crows, to fulfill that part of the contract and make me a medicine-man as you said you would."

After Wa-da-ha had finished, the powwow continued for several hours, and there was a great deal said on both sides of the question. At last, about three o'clock in the morning, horses' hoofs were heard coming in mad haste through the village. The sound approached the council-house and, as every one was listening with the greatest excitement, there burst through the door the two young men who bore the news from the agency. They advanced with rapid strides through the assembly to the centre and, standing there, were received by the chief.

"What news bring you?" cried the chief; "speak. We must hear."

Then the one who was commissioned to act as spokesman replied as follows:

"We reached the Sioux village safely and carried the news of the medicine-man and Spotted Eagle to Chief Rain-in-the-face. He called a council immediately upon hearing us, and asked what should be done. We told him that the medicine-man and Spotted Eagle were held by us as prisoners, and we wished to know what they would give if we would release them. At this the chief flew in a great rage, and said to us that unless the two Sioux were immediately released he would have us tortured on the spot. Then we told him that the two men claimed to be bitter enemies of his; that they had led the attack upon the agency in order that a young girl named Wanneta might be captured by Spotted Eagle, and that the medi-

cine-man, Wa-da-ha, might have vengeance upon the chief by killing one called Strong Heart, his son. At this his rage subsided, and he called for a young man named John Runner, who was chief messenger of their tribe. John Runner spoke in the council, and said he had seen our people marching across the plain, led by these two men. He had not been believed until now, as it was thought impossible that two Sioux would turn traitors and betray their friends. But when they heard our story, and then John Runner's, everybody became intensely excited and cried out, 'Kill the old medicine-man; burn the old wretch alive; burn his accomplice, Spotted Eagle,' and there was the greatest excitement we ever saw. The chief questioned us fully, and we told him that we wished to know whether the Sioux nation wanted to put to death these two men, or whether we should put them to death. If they were traitors to us we wanted to put them to death, but if they had fulfilled their agreement with us we would not put them to death, but adopt them into our tribe. We said also if they had fulfilled their part of the contract with us, we should not deliver them into the hands of their people, since it was the Sioux whom they had betrayed, and not us. The chief flew into a great rage at this, and was about to order the young men to seize and bind us, when we reminded him that he had promised to hear what we had to say without detaining us. He flew into a fearful rage, and said that he would keep his word, but that he would give us thirty minutes to leave the village. We ran to our horses, and mounted and came as fast as we could."

During the recital of this story every one listened with breathless interest, and when the orator had finished, there went up a great shout from the assembled host. The Sioux wanted to put the prisoners to death, and that was reason enough for the Crows to protect them. So the medicine-man, taking advantage of the favourable impression in his behalf, sprang to his feet and called upon those present to witness what the messengers had said, and to take pity on him and his companion, and strike off their fetters.

At the order of Black Elk the cords were cut, and both of them released to live as Crows in the future. The council ended by the chief extending what we might call the hand of fellowship to them, and they were further cautioned to select each a squaw from among the Crow daughters, and settle down and live as became Crows. Their adoption into the tribe with due ceremony took place a few days later.

Spotted Eagle met a very pretty dark-eyed Crow girl one or two days after being released from imprisonment, and, with his usual impetuosity, began courting her. She enjoyed the courtship all the more as he knew but a very few words of her tongue, and made many laughable mistakes.* She taught him, however, as fast as he could learn, many new words, and about a month later he publicly announced Allitee, the daughter of one of the prominent warriors, as his squaw, and, settling down to the life

* When a man is adopted into a tribe the chief often gives him one or two ponies, and when he is seeking a squaw, the fact that he is not very rich leads his father-in-law to help him out — a custom which is not unknown in civilized communities.

of a Crow, began to support himself, as the rest did, by hunting, trapping, and stealing.

The medicine-man's career on this earth was destined to be of brief duration. Only two or three days after his adoption he left the camp, and rode unaccompanied twenty miles away to a spur of the Bad Lands, to gather some plants and herbs which did not grow upon the prairie, and which possessed medicinal qualities, such as Indian turnip. While he was digging the roots and bulbs, he was seen by a party of ten Sioux who were on the lookout for buffalo. They were from his own village, and knew him well. They dismounted from their ponies, approached noiselessly, and before the old fellow could rise to his feet they seized him firmly and bore him, kicking and struggling, to a level spot, where they tied him hand and foot to the back of his own pony. Leading the animal, they set off at a brisk trot for the Sioux camp, some thirty miles away. Wa-da-ha knew well that nothing that he might say or do would influence his captors in the least, and so he remained in perfect silence. His face, as he was tied to the pony's back, was turned upward toward the clouds, and was as immovable and unflinching as a stone. For that long thirty miles they took him at a brisk trot across the rolling prairie, the hot sun beating on his unprotected head, and his discomfiture greatly added to by a frequent slap or thrust from his captors as they rode along.

CHAPTER XI.

THE DEBATE OVER THE MEDICINE-MAN.

THE day following the flight of the Crows was spent by those encamped at the agency, for the most part, in talking over the events of the preceding night. The Indians who had been wounded, some six or seven in number, were tenderly cared for, while the five who had met death were laid out and prepared for burial, wrapped in most gorgeous blankets, and decked with feathers, beads, and paint, as symbolic of their deeds of valour and of the estimation in which they were held by the tribe. After the bodies had been prepared they were carried some little distance along the banks of the stream, and several scaffolds were erected in the limbs of large cottonwood trees. Here they were placed, and left in the open air until the flesh should decay from the bones. Then these were to be gathered and taken with due ceremony by the tribe to one of the hills near at hand, and deposited in their final resting-place in shallow graves. After the Indians had placed the bodies on the scaffolds they returned from the river-bank, leaving a few squaws and friends of the deceased to mourn and weep.

The white man may sorrow deeply at the death of a friend, but his grief has none of that wild, despairing expression such as Indian women give vent to when their

husbands, brothers, or sons have fallen in battle. According to the custom of the tribe, these squaws were to sit by the bodies of the dead until decay should so far advance as to render it impossible to remain near. Night after night, they sat a couple of hundred yards from the bodies, or as near as the odour from the decaying flesh would allow them, and kept up at regular intervals moaning and weeping of such sincerity as to wring the heart and force tears from the eyes of a listener. Through all the long hours of darkness, custom requires that they sit in the open air, or if it be chilly, around a little fire of drift-wood or buffalo chips, calling out in mournful tones the name of the dead, perhaps, in a freak of despair, tearing hair from their heads or cutting their arms and breasts with knives. The wolves gather at a distance, and answering their cries, give out long-drawn howls. The wind stirs the cottonwoods and causes the boughs to chafe and rub together, which, with the despairing cries of the squaws and the howls of the wolves, make a combination so weird and awful, that it is scarcely possible for one who had ever listened to the sounds to drive from his mind the deep impression which they make.

At the agency several new lodges were erected with the spare robes which the Indians happened to have, and thus quarters were made for about fifty of the warriors. Fifty more were left to camp as best they could in the open air, and the remainder, in company with the chief, turned northward to rejoin the buffalo party.

It was understood that the hunt was to be made as brief as possible, as the events which had just taken place

would not warrant Rain-in-the-face's band from remaining away from home for any length of time. The chief told the warriors left to guard the women and children that he would send forty or fifty of his young men, with plenty of fresh buffalo hides and meat loaded on pack-horses, to them in two or three days. They could then put up lodges sufficient for the entire party, and at the same time have an ample supply of provisions. The coming of so many warriors unexpectedly, although they had brought two or three days' rations with them, had considerably lessened the stock at the camp, so it was necessary to replenish at once or there would be suffering. The men sent back with hides and provisions came in with a train of pack-horses four days after the warriors had returned to the hunt.

When the Indians who had captured the medicine-man, Wa-da-ha, came into camp there was a scene of great excitement.

Sitting Bull and Rain-in-the-face had been back just a day and were preparing for a grand buffalo hunt on the morrow, for a herd of two thousand head had been discovered about twelve miles to the eastward. Every man was getting his gun and ammunition in readiness, some were burnishing their long lances, and a few of the poorer braves, who possessed bows and arrows only, were examining their arrows, attaching the sharp steel points more firmly to the shafts, and putting new strings on their bows.

It was well on toward five o'clock in the afternoon when the horsemen dashed into camp. As they rode

through the village they shouted out that they had captured the medicine-man, and were followed by a crowd, which so swelled in numbers as they galloped toward the centre of the camp, that when it was reached they were completely surrounded by the people. All the chiefs and head warriors were summoned, and sat in council around the body of Wa-da-ha to decide what should be done with him. He lay upon the ground, bound hand and foot, and it was with the greatest difficulty that they could keep the young men from rushing in and dragging him out to meet then and there the death he richly deserved. The wiser heads prevailed, however, and so no violence was done to the old rascal.

Springing to his feet, Sitting Bull called the warriors, who were making great demonstrations, to order, and requested them to listen while he should speak.

"My people," said he, "this question is not to be debated, for there is nothing to be said in defense of this man. The penalty for his treacherous act is death, and he shall be burned at the stake just as soon as the buffalo hunt is over and we are settled on our reservations. He will die at the lower agency. A day shall be set, and many of our warriors will come down and assist in the ceremonies. Therefore it is necessary that Wa-da-ha be guarded closely, so that he shall not escape. We must hasten and get all the meat that we possibly can and return to our homes. This must be done in order to protect the women and children left behind, for there is no knowing when the Crows may attack them."

Rain-in-the-face arose, and nodding toward Sitting

Bull, whom he recognized as a chief of more power than himself, spoke a few words to the assembled house.

"The death of this man must be a warning to every one in the nation. If we allow traitors to live, we can trust no one; and if we do not punish crime, our young men—and perhaps our old men—will not hesitate to perform most wicked deeds, believing that justice will not fall upon them. This man must die at the next new moon. Chief Sitting Bull has spoken well. Five young men must guard him each night, and if by any chance the Crows should assault this village, the person nearest the dog must put a bullet through his head or a knife into his body. Thus his escape, in the confusion of an attack, will be prevented."

Chief Gopher then arose from his place, and addressing the crowd, spoke as follows:

"What my brothers have said carries great weight, and is true. All that I have to add is, that I am full of sorrow that there should be in the Sioux nation a man who, contrary to the teachings of his high calling, is a traitor. A medicine-man is supposed to have communion with great Waukantauka. It seems that our medicine-man has had communication with the evil spirit, Wakausica. Let this be a terrible warning to all who aspire to further their own ends at the sacrifice of the lives of their brothers. Let the medicine-man be put to death with the most fearful tortures, and let an armed guard stand by the post so that he shall not be aided to escape by any friend that he may have. I have done."

The medicine-man heard all these remarks, and then

from his position on the ground he cried out, when all had finished: "Chief Sitting Bull, I beg of you let me speak."

At the sound of his voice, the Indians, who had been quiet during the speeches, set up a most terrific yell, and with a common impulse, many rushed toward the central spot to lay hands on Wa-da-ha. It was with the greatest difficulty that the chief could compel them to stand back. When he had done so, he looked at the figure on the ground, and raising his voice to a loud shout, cried: "If I hear one more word out of your head you shall be burned this very night. Young men, take him to an empty lodge. Make him fast to the lodge-pole. Keep his feet tied, but loosen his hands at meal-time. Stand without on each side and at the rear during the day-time. At night, two of you remain inside and two outside near the entrance. If he tries to get away, put a bullet into his old carcass."

At this the young men sprang forward, and, seizing Wa-da-ha roughly, jerked him to his feet. They cut the cords which bound his ankles, and holding him by each arm, that he might not escape, walked him to an empty tipi not far from the edge of the village. Here they tied him, as directed, to the lodge-pole, and after giving him a supply of meat and water for his evening meal, sat where they could watch every motion that he should make.

The next day and the day after the hunters attacked an enormous herd of bison, and killed in the chase as much meat as all their ponies could bear away. The squaws

and braves worked very hard to cut up the carcasses and lay out the strips of meat for the sun to dry. It was nearly a week before they were ready to move. During this time the medicine-man had been closely guarded. At times he had been made to walk to prevent his limbs from stiffening.

Now that meat enough for the next winter's use had been obtained, the camp was broken, and, with well-ladened animals, the Indians started upon the return trip. They were nearly three days on the way. The Sioux of the upper reservation were not so long in reaching their destination, as they had less distance to travel, but Rain-in-the-face's band did not reach their home until the evening of the third day. As soon as they had arrived, they began the erection of a large village upon the site of the one they had abandoned before starting upon the hunt. This was laid out as was the former one, the tipis occupying just about the same positions. The council-house had been left standing when they departed, but the Crows, in marching against the agency, had passed near enough to see it and burn it down. Rain-in-the-face gave orders for a new and larger one to be erected, and his orders were carried out during the next few days.

The first thing that Omaha and Two Bears did, as soon as they returned, was to run and embrace their daughters, who had been left at the agency. Wanneta had taken excellent care of Strong Heart during the week, and he was getting on so well that it was not necessary for her to remain with him constantly. So the next day, after the home-coming of her people, she assisted her

father and mother in putting up their tipi at the old camp site.

The whole family worked at this faithfully all day, and by meal-time that evening the task was completed. So well had the work been done that everything was in its accustomed place, and a stranger to the Indian village could not have told that the tipis had been absent two weeks, but for the short, green grass which had grown up in the paths leading, in various directions, through the camp. That evening the family gathered in the wigwam to talk over the events of the past fortnight. They were to have a sort of sociable, with refreshments, and a general good time.

Omaha had made a number of little corn-cakes to be eaten, and had fried several pounds of buffalo-steak. Thus, with the help of the refreshments and the pipes of the men, a very enjoyable evening was anticipated.

Gopher, the story-teller, had promised to come over and tell them an Indian romance, while Wanneta expected many of her friends. She also looked forward to receiving congratulations upon her engagement with the chief's son.

A bright fire in the centre of the wigwam sent its smoke curling upward, the opening at the top allowing the fumes to escape. Around the fire sat the members of the family and eight or ten young friends, while over in the corner, so far back that flashes from the fire-light only occasionally lit up his features, sat Gopher, the story-teller. His voice coming from the dark recess gave great effect to the romantic tale which he related, and

when he enlarged upon some particular point his tones became louder, or perhaps sank to a guttural whisper, and thus intensified the story and made it all the more vivid.

After their simple refreshments had been served, and the men had lighted their pipes, Gopher cleared his throat, and, with his usual opening remark, "Give attention, my children," began the narrative.

"There was once a young man in the Sioux nation who loved a maiden who was a Chippewa. There was a time when the Sioux were at war with the Chippewas, but when I was a young man there was no war, and the Chippewas were at peace with our people. It was during the courtship of this young man of whom I am speaking that war was declared.

"His father was poor, but the young girl had wealthy parents, who had made much wampum and owned many ponies. Her father was an arrowhead-maker. He used to chip flint arrow, spear, and lance heads, and made knives of flint for the use of his people. This was before the whites introduced steel tips for arrows and spears. His work was so fine, and the implements that he made were so sharp, that they were in demand among all the people living on the river which the whites call Mississippi. The village of the Chippewas was about forty miles up the river from our village, and we used often to go to their camp and exchange our furs for the arrows that this old man made. I do not remember his name, but the name of the Sioux brave was Young Bear and the girl's name, Allaha.

"The young man wanted to marry the girl very much, but he had no ponies, although he was a very brave warrior, and had taken several scalps when he was but seventeen years of age. He went to the village of the Chippewas, and there met his sweetheart along the banks of one of the clear streams which empty into the great Father of Waters. They talked long and earnestly together, and at last came to the conclusion that if her father would not give consent to Allaha becoming his squaw, they would steal several of his ponies and run away to the Sioux camp, where they would live. So they went to the village, and the young man entered the tipi to speak with her father. He laid his case before him with all the eloquence that he possessed, and begged that the daughter be given to him as his squaw. The young girl stood in the doorway meanwhile, and as her lover spoke, she by smile and occasional nod of the head confirmed everything that he said. When he had finished, she, too, entered, and, passing to her father's side, took his hand and beseechingly asked that he should grant their request. The arrowhead-maker, however, wished to have his daughter marry a young man in her own tribe. He would not listen to what the young people had to say, but drove the brave from his presence with bitter and cruel words. The girl followed her lover outside, and, placing herself by his side, said to her parents, 'If you drive this young man away, I will go with him, for his way is my way; I love him, and I will go where he goes.'

"Then the father, springing forward, seized his daughter

by the arm and tried to drag her forcibly into the wigwam. She kicked and struggled and screamed, but he was stronger, and would have taken her into the lodge had not the young man interposed, and, shoving the old man roughly to one side, caught his sweetheart away from him. He bade her run swiftly to the corral and get on a fleet horse, while he would follow. Each selected a good pony, and before the irate father had aroused some of the warriors, were well upon their journey. But ride as hard as they might, it seemed as if their horses only crept. They could hear in their rear the steady advance of the pursuing Indians, and before they had gone many miles their horses became so nearly exhausted that capture was inevitable.

"Seeing that they could not escape, they wheeled about to face the danger, and the young man drew his quiver well on to his left shoulder so that he could draw his arrows rapidly. Facing the pursuers, he drew his bow back until the head of the shaft touched the face of the bow, and letting it fly with a twang, saw with great satisfaction, one of the foremost ponies stumble and fall, mortally wounded. He was about to draw another arrow and send it on its errand of death, when two well-directed shafts pierced his own steed, and in the animal's fall he was thrown heavily to the ground and his leg pinned fast. The Chippewas rushed up, and with gleeful shouts dragged him from under the horse and bound his hands tight behind his back. They took him and the girl back to the village and delivered him over to the wrathful arrowhead-maker. In spite of the entreaties of his

daughter, the old man administered a most merciless beating to the bound Sioux. During it the young man never uttered a sound, but took his punishment stolidly, while his sweetheart stood by, with tears streaming down her cheeks, begging her father to desist.

"While this was going on, the old medicine-man of the tribe came along, and seeing what was taking place, with the characteristic cruelty and deviltry of his kind, drew from his medicine-bag a little bone four inches in length, which was sharpened at each end. As an additional insult, he seized the young man, and called upon several standing near to hold him. Then, catching him by the scalp-lock, he pulled strongly and raised the skin from the summit of his head about a quarter of an inch; he then ran this sharp pointed bone under the skin and over the skull, making it protrude on either side. Then, releasing him, he told him to go home and tell his people how the Chippewas treated the Sioux.

"The young man walked the entire forty miles with the bone still in his head. Reaching his father's tipi, he called for the chief, and uncovering, showed him the now swelled and inflamed wound. A council was called at once, and as the braves assembled the young man entered the circle, showed them his disfigured head and lacerated back. The greatest indignation prevailed, and a war party was raised to march in two days against the Chippewas. The young man removed the bone from his scalp, put cold water on it to ease the inflammation, and was able to lead the expedition.

"Arriving at the village, they charged and captured a

few warriors, killing several. The hut of the arrowhead-maker was surrounded, and Young Bear called out to Allaha to come out, for he was there and would protect her. She came rushing from the hut, and threw herself into his arms with tears of joy. She told him that her father had threatened to make her marry a young man in the tribe whom she disliked, and one that she could not love. The marriage was to have taken place on the morning of the next day, and the coming of her lover was just in time to prevent it. Her father came out of the house at this, and was cautioned by the young man to say nothing to the Sioux present, or his life would pay the forfeit. Then telling the Chippewa prisoners that they could go and that their village should be spared, Young Bear assisted his sweetheart to mount a pony which he had brought for her, and together they rode back toward the Sioux village. There they lived together happily for many years, and reared a family of sons and daughters which were a great credit to them.

"I, Gopher, am their eldest son. I have finished;" and with that the sub-chief arose, and without further word to any present, strode out of the tipi and vanished in the darkness.

That night Wanneta told her parents of her engagement to Strong Heart, and received their blessing and approval. It put her father in an excellent humour to think that his family was to be allied to that of the head chief, and so he talked and chatted in his jocular way until well toward midnight.

John Runner sat over in the corner silent during the

congratulations heaped upon Wanneta. His father knew John's temperament well. He was one of those quiet men who have little to say when others are talking. Yet John stood first among all the young men of the tribe as messenger, and what we would call confidential clerk of the chief. He was thought a great deal of by all in the village, and, with perhaps the exception of Strong Heart, there was no one who bore a better reputation. John's powers of endurance were simply marvellous. He had been known on one occasion to carry a message of life and death, when the agent's wife was very ill, to the railroad station, one hundred miles away, in nine hours and thirty minutes. He had ridden his pony eighty miles of the distance when the horse fell dead. Scarcely had the body of the animal touched the ground than John was on his feet. Casting off all his finery and his blanket, wearing nothing but a little hunting-sack and his breech-clout, he crossed the prairie with long, springing strides, and sent word to the nearest city for a physician. For this valuable service the agent gave him two good ponies, besides paying him liberally for the one which had died.

As John sat in the corner his father, with his usual habit of always speaking to the point, said, "John, you are old enough to have a squaw. Why don't you select one and settle down?"

John fell a-thinking, and presently asked his father how many ponies he would give him to begin life with, if he were to marry.

"I will give you three ponies the day that you take a squaw and put up a wigwam for yourself," said Two Bears.

"Well, father, I will think over your proposition, and may accept it before long."

John thought that he had said all that the subject called for, and, lighting his pipe, relapsed into silence, while he sent up puff after puff of smoke to the dome of the wigwam. After the rest of the family had turned in, knocking the ashes from his little red catlinite pipe, he rolled himself in his blanket, put his feet toward the fire, and dropped soundly to sleep, to dream of buffaloes, Indian maidens, foot-races, and war-dances.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FATE OF THE MEDICINE-MAN.

THE next morning the Indian village was not astir until late. One by one the braves crept from their tipis, and stretching themselves lazily on the shady side of their lodges, indulged in a morning smoke.

Wanneta was very anxious to see her lover, and had scarcely finished her morning meal before she ran over to the lodge of the chief to see how he was getting on. She was surprised to see him sitting bolt-upright, and to find him in great spirits. After the first greetings were over, Strong Heart said to her: "Richards, the squaw man, says that I may walk around a little if I am very careful not to move my left arm violently or quickly. He says that the bone has begun to knit together, and that the shoulder will soon be well enough for me to use the muscles in that region as freely as I did before."

This was indeed good news to Wanneta, and she was as much pleased at the prospects of their speedy marriage as was the young man himself.

The medicine-man, Wa-da-ha, had been closely guarded since his capture and sentence, and, although he had all the food he wished to eat, he chafed not a little over his close confinement. Rain-in-the-face had forbidden any

one to see him, and only those who guarded him were permitted to look upon his face.

The family of Two Bears took the arrest of the old man very coolly, and, although he was the father of Two Bears himself, no one seemed to be affected by what we should consider a family disgrace. Two Bears sorrowed a little that his father should be guilty of such a crime, but his feelings of sorrow soon turned to contempt and hatred, and the night of the execution of Wa-da-ha, no one took a more active part in the ceremonies than the medicine-man's own son.

The night of the arrival of the Sioux from the upper reservation was set as the date of the execution. It was rather uncertain when Sitting Bull's warriors would put in an appearance, and the whole village was in readiness for two days, awaiting their coming. They were about to give them up and hold the ceremony without further delay, when at noon, one dark and cloudy day, some five hundred young men and warriors arrived.

A council was called in the afternoon, the warriors having had sufficient time to corral their ponies, partake of food, and enjoy the usual after-dinner smoke. At this council the question for debate was, what was the best method to be followed in the execution of Wa-da-ha? About four o'clock the assembled body came to a unanimous decision, and a number of young men were commissioned to prepare, with the greatest attention to detail, everything to be used in the forthcoming ceremonies. The squaws were enjoined to put the council-house in the best possible order, and to have plenty of meat

cooked and ready for the dance. The chief, in his speech, charged the orchestra to do their best, and dispense strains of good music. He warned any who might be of faint heart to stay at home, and cautioned the agent and his employees who were present, to make no interference during the proceedings, declaring that, should they attempt to stop the burning, they would be driven out of the camp and forced to seek shelter on the open plain.

As soon as it was dark the natives built large fires in the form of a circle, about fifty feet apart, around the council-house. These fires were placed back from the building a hundred and fifty feet, and formed a ring, the diameter of which was something over three hundred feet. Within, the newly-elected medicine-man of the tribe was to be vested with his office, or, as we would say, initiated. The oldest members of the tribe were to gather and perform sacred rites over the candidate. While this was taking place, the warriors and other men were to dance outside, three or four rows deep, around the house near the bonfires, on the inside of the circle. The squaws and children who wished to watch the proceedings could remain outside the circle of fires.

Several young men had gone to the woods, and with their iron tomahawks cut down a sapling eight or nine inches in diameter. They brought about ten feet of the trunk of the tree within the circle, and having dug a hole, set it about fifty feet from the entrance of the council-house, leaving some seven feet above the ground. The three feet below the surface was ample to hold the pole firmly in position. Shortly after dark the

fires were lighted, and a dozen squaws and men from both the Sioux camps seated themselves a little to one side of the entrance of the council-house ready to begin their dismal singing and to beat upon the tom-toms. They struck up a rude song as the old men entered. After some thirty-five of the braves had preceded him, there followed the one who had practiced slightly the duties of medicine-man, and who wished to be installed as Wa-da-ha's successor. It was Chief Gopher's eldest son. He entered very solemnly, and seating himself in the centre of the circle of wise men, listened while they began singing a mournful chaunt. A buffalo robe was thrown across the entrance of the chamber, and fastened on all sides. In spite of their seclusion, sounds of the tom-tom, songs of the dancers, and the despairing shrieks of the tortured, were borne to their ears. But the ceremonies within went on, and were not in the least affected by the uproar that reached them through the walls of the building. The grave, impenetrable faces of the old men neither showed that they heard, nor indicated that they knew aught of what was going on without.

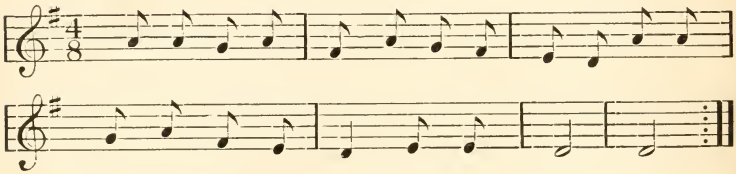
After the wise men had entered, the squaws ceased their dismal tune, and began to sing a loud and shrill one, which had considerable fire to it, was more characteristic of excitement, and was well fitted to serve as an accompaniment of the wild scenes soon to follow. The waiting Indians outside the circle were evidently looking forward to this as a signal to advance in a body, for as soon as they heard it, they burst forth by the hundred with loud yells and cries, which, for a time, drowned the song

of the women. Their impetuous rush into the inner circle might be likened to a crowd of boys pouring out of school in the afternoon, with laughter and shouts and great hilarity at their escape from odious tasks. The foremost of this throng bore along old Wa-da-ha, the medicine-man, whom they hurried to the post, and without delay tied securely. They made him stand with his back against the stake, and tied his hands firmly, about eight inches above his head. They also made his feet fast, while around the centre of his body they passed a strong leather thong secured in a hard knot. They then tied the end to the post. The thong was about six feet in length, and if his hands and feet had been free, would have allowed him to walk around it.

The circle, which had been empty with the exception of the orchestra, was now filled with fully five hundred Indians. These were all warriors. Without the circle were at least two thousand spectators. First they formed in three rows and danced around the council-house for fully an hour. In this dance they wore nothing but the breech-clout, and a little skirt of deer skin, ornamented with beads, secured around the waist with a leather thong hanging about half-way to the knees. Their bodies and faces were most horribly painted. Wa-da-ha was not painted when tied to the post, although he was stripped of everything he had on. Two of the Indians, while the dancing went on, ran up to him and striped his body with a little red, yellow, and black ochre. From his neck upward across the face they painted the right side white, the left side black. Wa-da-ha had said nothing,

nor did he utter a single sentence until the fagots were piled about him.

The song which the Indians sang to the dance was rather musical, although it consisted of a repetition of about fifteen or twenty notes. I insert it here as nearly as it can be remembered. As the squaws gave it, the men made no response, nor did they sing at all until the fagots were lighted; when they droned out the same doleful tune which was used in the buffalo-dance.



As the squaws sang, the men kept time by stamping hard, with one foot and then the other, upon the ground.

Their bodies were not bent constantly, as in the buffalo-dance, but they occasionally walked erect, now leaping in the air, now shaking a stick, switch, or club at the figure bound to the stake as they passed him. The war-whoop was not sounded, nor was there much noise made.

Six young men now ran up to the post where Wa-da-ha was tied, and spread around him a circle of fagots. The wood was a dry brush which would burn quickly, making a blaze of some height, which would as quickly die down. It was placed about four feet away from the base of the post, so that the flames would reach and scorch him severely, but would not result fatally. As the young men

placed these fagots in position, there was a slight intermission. The braves hurried off to some fires a short distance away, where the squaws had been preparing some meat for them. Having eaten this, they ran in a body to the creek below, and, by the light of a large fire built on the edge of the water, scooped up great quantities of white clay, and smeared their bodies and faces with it, having first taken off the skirt of beaded deer-skin; then, rushing back to the fires, they secured lumps of charcoal, or embers, and made broad, black bands across their faces and over their foreheads. On their breasts each drew a large black hand, the symbol of death. The face of the captive was painted entirely white during this proceeding, and upon each cheek was stamped a blackened hand, indicative of the fate that was soon to befall him.

Scarcely had they returned to the circle when the dark clouds, which had overhung the village all the evening, were broken by flash after flash of lightning. As the dance went on, the squaws were busily engaged in bringing dry wood from the river banks and storing it in the tipis near at hand, so that, if the rain should come, the fires would not go out. The thunder pealed and roared and shook the heavens, but as the rain did not fall at once, they hoped to get the rites well under way before the violence of the storm should burst upon them.

With most terrific yells, the Indians, hideously painted, dashed between the bonfires and entered the circle. They raced around and around the enclosure, brandishing sticks and clubs, and calling out to the victim taunts such as the following:

"Wa-da-ha, the great traitor, is going to be burned; he will die like a craven;" or, "The treacherous medicine-man has the honour of being burned like a brave man, but he is a coward, and will die like a child;" or, "Wa-da-ha, medicine-man of the Crows. Why do not his chosen people save him?"

Thus they railed at him as each passed near.

The squaws struck up once more the dismal buffalo-dance song, singing louder and more dolefully, and as two blazing fagots were thrown into the heap of brush about the post, they drawled their tune out into a long, monotonous funeral dirge. As the fire was lighted some one called out, as is the custom when one is burned, no matter how base he may be, "Speak."

Straightening himself up, Wa-da-ha looked about him, and, as the flames whirled and hissed about his breast, uttered a few rapid sentences, full of the scorn, defiance, and desperation which a dying man can put into his last words.

"My own people, the Sioux, are my people no longer. I went to the Crows. They received me, and had I not been captured I should have been their medicine-man."

He was interrupted with a derisive howl.

"You may burn me with the flames," he continued, as a sheet of fire swept across his body and caused him to shrink and quiver, "but my people, the Crows, will avenge my death, and will take fifty scalps for my precious life. Go on and burn. I may have tried to do you all the injury in my power, but I am no coward. Stir up

your flames. They are not hot enough. I defy you to do your worst."

It was terrible to see the man suffer. He had been brought up among a people whose stoicism, whose insensibility to suffering, are the marvel of the civilized world. There he stood and spoke while the flames devoured his body. All the outward sign of pain visible was the contraction of some muscle or the shrinking of a limb as some doubly sensitive nerve or organ was touched by the fury of the blaze. But he did not moan nor scream, and as soon as the blaze had subsided, even the hot breath of the coals upon his naked body seemed to have no effect. The great red and bleeding blisters stood out with terrible distinctness, and the lower portion of his body and limbs presented a spectacle sickening to any but a savage, and one which the strongest could not look upon without quailing. As Wa-da-ha ceased speaking the dance went on; the coals from about his feet were quickly scraped back some little distance, and a bucket of cold water was poured upon him to give him some little comfort before the second course in the diabolical proceedings was begun.

His feet and hands were untied, the cord around his waist was fastened more strongly, and he was then commanded to walk around the post, first in one direction and then in the other. Knowing that they wanted him to do this in order that they might prod and strike his bleeding and stinging body with sticks and switches, he refused and stood with his back to the stake. Exasperated at this, several of the men rushed upon him, and with

their sticks drove him out the length of the thong. While they were doing this one over-zealous brave, wishing to distinguish himself, rushed up with a strong cottonwood club, about five feet in length, and aimed a terrific blow at his head. Dodging this, and furious with pain and anger, Wa-da-ha, in the twinkling of an eye, wrenched the club away from its owner, and, wielding it with desperation, crushed the skulls of two Indians and broke the ribs of a third before he was seized and overpowered.

At this unexpected and terrible revenge the crowd was stupefied for a few moments; then they set up a terrific shout of anger and rage, and, rushing toward him, would have beaten out his brains had not the young men, with great presence of mind, formed about him and driven back the throng.

It was now resolved to torture him with all the cruelties that the ingenious and devilish mind of the Indian could conceive. Sending the squaws to the fires around, they gathered up some four or five bushels of red-hot coals, and spread them upon the ground around the post, compelling Wa-da-ha to walk thereon.

The exertion of defending himself, and the terrible pain he now suffered, broke down his strong will, and he relieved his mind by uttering screams and shrieks of pain and anguish, which were so loud and terrible that they were heard a mile away. But they brought forth only laughter and jest from his tormentors, who neither sympathized nor felt for him.

For a few moments he regained possession of himself, and walking back and forth upon the red-hot coals, looked

out into the crowd, and saw there Wanneta and her little sister, who had come for a moment to look upon the proceedings before returning to their lodge.

"Oh, you witch!" he shrieked. "I conjure, by the Great Wakausica, that your path in life shall be dark—that you shall die before long. You have caused all my trouble, and I will be revenged upon you—even from the great land of the hereafter."

At the words, he saw her face harden with anger, her eyes flash, and her body tremble; she did not experience the fear that he expected she would, but her little sister by her side shrieked out with terror and rushed toward the wigwam, hearing, as she ran, his last curse.

"The youngest of this breed shall die before the new moon. Great Wakausica has said it."

At this, Wanneta could bear no more, and springing through the circle in front of the disfigured form of Wa-da-ha, while the Indians looked on in undisguised amazement, she called up all she had learned at school, and selecting the most terrible denunciation her mind could conceive, shrieked out to him: "Villains and murderers may escape punishment in this world, but neither here nor in the hereafter is there any hope for Judas."

The squaws stopped their singing—the whole proceeding came to a halt for a moment, and as Wanneta gained her place in the crowd and ran back to her father's lodge, one of the squaw men called out, in the Sioux tongue, who Judas was in the history of the pale-faces, so that all might understand.

Wa-da-ha knew, from conversation with the mis-

sionaries, who this man Judas was, and, being thus checkmated in his last words, he lost complete control of his senses, and shrieked and cursed as he tugged at the end of the leather thong. Some one threw more brush upon the coals, others followed the example, and it was not many moments before the flames were seething all around the body of the poor wretch. Above their roar and the noise of the dancers, his shrieks and cries could be heard, causing even the stout hearts of some of the spectators to quail, and impressing upon the minds of the young what terrible punishment traitors were to expect.

The Indians, wrought up to a pitch of frenzy by this last scene, shrieked and yelled in answer to Wa-da-ha's dying cries. Their faces were contorted by fearful passions; the fire-light and the blaze of the funeral pyre made a picture which hell itself could scarcely duplicate.

The thunder roared and pealed, the lightning flashed across the sky, and the wind, now blowing a terrific gale, sent coals and sparks into the assembled throng. A few moments passed in the wildest of revelry, then suddenly, without warning, there fell from the blackened heavens a torrent of water. As the flood descended the dancing stopped, some of the Indians crowding into the council-chamber, while others returned to their tipis.

The medicine-man, now nearly gone, sank upon the bed of coals which the rain was rapidly cooling, and with senses weakened so that he could feel nothing but the awful agony he suffered, permitted the rain to fall upon his upturned face. As the flood descended, the cooling touch partially revived him. Bracing his hands against

the ground, he raised his body half-way to a sitting posture, and tried to draw his legs under him to rise. To his horror he heard the bones of his feet scrape upon the ground. The effort overtaxed his strength, and he sank back upon the cinders, with only breath enough left to deliver a parting curse on the Sioux nation. Then his spirit fled to the other world, to render an account of the evil deeds which he had committed.

The new medicine-man having been elected, the council adjourned about midnight, and all wended their way to their homes. Toward morning, the skies cleared and the moon came out and shed its light upon the scene of death and desolation below. The evil spirits of Wakausica seemed to haunt the place, and the death of Wa-da-ha seemed to have called forth all of their hellish ingenuity, for, from the day that this traitor passed from earth, the Sioux nation entered upon a series of disasters which has had no parallel in the history of the Indian nations of the United States.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MARRIAGE OF WANNETA.

THE morning of the next day found the village astir early. Some of the squaws were directed by the chief to drag what was left of Wa-da-ha to the banks of the creek and there inter it. They carried the half-charred body of the victim to the spot, and hastily digging a shallow hole, finished as rapidly as possible the odious task, and returning to their tipis, went about their usual duties.

With the burial of the body of the traitor and the clearing of the spot upon which the tragedy had been enacted, disappeared the last traces of that night's terrible work.

In the wigwam of Two Bears, on the morning of this day, a pow-wow was held, in which a name was given to his youngest daughter.

It is the custom in many Indian tribes not to name the girls until they are six or seven years old. So Two Bears' little daughter had been unknown save by such terms as, "My little one," or "My pretty one," or "Laughing Eyes," "Bright Eyes," etc.

Omaha decided that it was time the child should have a name. Two Bears, therefore, called in members of the tribe to assist and to view the ceremonies. Wanneta sat next to her little sister. She listened with attention to

the remarks of her father and mother until a bright idea struck her, when she said:

"Friends, when I was in the white man's school I read the book by that great pale-face story-teller named Longfellow. In it he describes a beautiful girl who lived far east of us, on the great Father of Waters. He says that this girl was the pet and pride of her people, that the young men courted her smile, and he that won her to be his squaw was the envy of every one in the tribe. Therefore, as she was such a bright and lovely girl, and as the name is quite appropriate, meaning laughing water, let us name little sister, Minnehaha."

"Well said," remarked Two Bears; "the name is most certainly a good one, and although coming from a white man's book, may contain good medicine. I have not much faith in the white man's names or the white man's ways, but if it be Omaha's pleasure, and John Runner gives his consent, then her name shall be Minnehaha."

John Runner, from his corner in the tipi, paused over his pipe, sending a cloud of smoke back of him into the dark recess, and gave an emphatic grunt as a sign of his consent. Truth to tell, he thought the whole matter of little importance. Omaha spoke a few words.

"My child, take this name which your sister, Wanneta, has given you, and try to be as good and true to the Sioux nation as the girl whom the great story-teller describes was to her people. I have finished."

"Now, little sister, Minnehaha, you are named, and in the future we shall know what to call you."

Just at this moment old Gopher entered, and seating

himself in the corner, in his usually quiet fashion, was evidently prepared to tell them all a story if they were willing to listen. Knowing well how to loosen the old man's tongue, Two Bears handed him a large red pipe filled with fragrant tobacco. Gopher arose, and going to the fire in the rear of the wigwam, lighted the pipe and then returned to his seat.

"Oh, Chief Gopher," said Wanneta, "we have just named our little sister, Minnehaha, and if you know any stories about the great northland, from which the white story-teller got his heroes, we wish you would tell us about them. We know you have heard many stories from the old men that have passed away, and we trust you will relate some of them for our benefit."

"My child," said Gopher, "there comes into my mind and there rises before my eyes, at this moment, a great mist, in which I see dimly outlined the features of friends now in the happy hunting-grounds. They seem to say, 'Speak to them of us; tell them the good, but omit that which is evil.'

"In my last story, I told you of the romance of my father and mother, and to-night I have to tell you a story which has been handed down from father to son. While it may not be believed by the pale-faces, yet to Sioux who receive the traditions of their fathers it will be filled with truth. Our traditions are at least as truthful as many which our more civilized brothers, the pale-faces, put in their great books.

"There was once a large body of warriors from the Sioux nation, who went out hunting. It was many years

ago, so my grandfather told me, before the white man entered our territory to mar our happiness, drive away our game, and teach us lying, thieving, and other vices. These hunters, as they journeyed, neared the source of the great Father of Waters, where they came upon a beautiful lake. From this lake there arose an enormous flock of geese, which was led by a large white swan of great size and of marvellous grace and beauty. The flock flew to the farther end of the lake, where they again settled upon the water. My people thought they would secure some of these birds. Possibly they might capture the great white swan itself, by creeping around the shore of the lake and coming suddenly upon the flock under cover of the heavy trees and underbrush which lined its banks. Some of the young men, with the impatience of youth, crept forward too hastily through the cedar underbrush, and the birds, noticing their approach, took to flight.

"'You now see what a hasty action has done,' said the chief; 'you have lost the chance of capturing a bird that might greatly add to the good fortunes of our tribe.'

"At this moment, a great fish-hawk, which had been resting upon a branch of a withered oak overhanging the water and who had overheard the conversation, swooped down from the perch and circled around the chief's head and cried out, 'Remember, oh chief, that you bear my totem, that I am your brother, and will not forsake you in this hour of need, but will help you to secure the swan.' Having said this, he flew into the air in the direction

which the swan had taken, and rapidly disappeared from sight.

"It so happened that a powerful wind from the north turned the water of the lake into white stone, so that it would bear the chief and his young men.

"'Follow me,' said the hawk.

"They ran forward many miles, until the trees, whose shadows are clearly outlined in the blue waters of the lake during the windless period, were lost to view. On and on they hurried over the glassy waters, until the shore itself had completely vanished. Toward nightfall, the old chief, who began to believe that the hawk was deceiving them, halted, and addressing the flying bird, cried: 'Whither leadest thou, O hawk?'

"'Fear not,' said the hawk; 'you must keep your eyes fixed upon me. I will fly close to you. Follow me through all the darkness of the night; if you fail to do this you are lost, for the spirit of the lake will cause the warm winds to blow, the white stone surface will melt, and you will sink into the water, to be dragged to a horrible death by the spirits that lurk below.'

"Weary and footsore, they followed through the darkness. After many hours of toil, the rays of the rising sun streaked the heavens with brilliant carmine hues. Still they pushed on. Again the hawk flew in circles around their heads and cried:

"'You are now coming to the home of the swan. Let one of your best hunters choose from his quiver an arrow with a white feather, and add to it the one from my tail which now falls toward you.'

"A feather flew from the tail of the hawk and circled downward toward the chief, who gave it to one of his young warriors. The brave, when he had placed it in the end of the arrow-shaft, said: 'What shall I do now?'

"'Let your young men hide themselves among the rocks and shrubs of the shore line, and let the warrior follow me to the withered birch-tree, in which the swan has its nest. As he comes forward, the swan will fly upward, but with his arrow let him be swift, and pierce her as she flies.'

"The brave did as he was bid. His arrow transfixed the swan so that she fell to the earth and became an easy prey.

"'Why have you done me this injury?' said the swan. 'I have always been friendly to the hawk, but now he has persuaded you to injure me,'—and as she finished, the blood gushed from her side, she closed her eyes, gasped, and died. The beautiful feathers that covered her body were stained a brilliant red. Hastily and roughly the warrior removed the skin, carried it back to his friends, who were waiting among the rocks, and handed it to the old chief.

"He, when he had returned to their country, many miles to the south, soon forgot the great evil that he had done to an unoffending victim. He gave the skin to his daughter, who wove it into a mantle which encircled her form. But no good came of the killing, for her days were numbered. Going out to catch fish in the lake in a canoe one day, she was drowned. The canoe was found floating bottom upward—the evil spirits in the lake, who were

friendly to the swan, had seized the boat and dragged the maiden to the depths below, and she was nevermore seen. It so happened, still further, that a terrible pestilence broke out in the tribe, and but few were left alive. They deserted the land where they had lived, and the tribes who live in the neighbourhood never enter the country to hunt, for the maiden and the hunter are sure to pierce those who enter their country with an arrow tipped with the gray and white feather.

"The very trees are stunted, and the forest is so dense and dark that the light of day scarcely penetrates it. It is an accursed spot. See, therefore, my children, the ill an evil action may occasion, and be careful to harm no one without just cause."

At the conclusion of the story, all sat silently for a few moments, engaged in deep thought. Then Wanneta broke the silence by asking, "How long ago did this happen, Chief Gopher?"

"It was many years before I was born," he replied. "I do not know how long."

"That is why it is considered so unlucky to shoot a white swan, is it not?"

"Yes," continued Gopher; "nothing could possibly bring more evil on a people than the killing of one of these noble birds. It is, indeed, one of the greatest crimes, and nothing could be done that would atone for it."

"Well," said Wanneta, "I do not think our people will ever do such a foolish thing again; and certainly those who did this have received their just punishment. Revenge on enemies and cruel treatment of them is terrible

to white people, but it is perfectly proper. A Sioux may kill and torture his enemy, but he must not disturb the sacred birds which the Great Spirit put in his land to sing for him and flying hither and thither to bring good luck upon his tribe."

"You are quite right," said Chief Gopher. "The Sioux nation will never commit such a great folly again."

There was a few moments' silence after this last remark. Then Two Bears changed the subject somewhat, and said, "Gopher, I hear that the pale-faces have discovered a valuable metal, which they call gold, about two days' journey south of us. The news was brought by runners that several pale-faces had been after this valuable metal. That brings up a very important subject for the consideration of our tribe. I know from what my people told me when I was a young man, and from tales with other tribes, that when this metal was discovered in the far West, the Indians were driven out of the country by the swarms of whites that poured through their territory and across the plains on their way to the gold fields. Our people, as well as the Blackfeet, Pawnees, Comanches, Rees, and many other tribes, were driven out of our own country and forced to flee to the north. The Indians living west in the mountains were even more persecuted; and at this day several of the tribes then most important are now eking out a miserable existence on roots and small game. A council will probably be called in a few days, and this matter will be under discussion."

"Two Bears speaks the truth," said Gopher, from his seat in the corner, "for I, too, know from conversation

with other tribes and from experience, that if the whites are not prevented by force or by orders from the Great Father at Washington, they will pour through our country. They will kill all the buffalo, covet and seize upon our richest lands, and force us to live like the Digger Indians in the West. Why this yellow metal, gold, should so attract and make men almost insane I cannot see. It has no great value to us as a tribe, but to the whites its value is beyond our comprehension. In search of it they will brave untold hardships, endure all sorts of privations and face any danger."

"Chief Gopher," said Two Bears, "speaks wisely. Our people must stop this invasion into the territory, and Chief Rain-in-the-face must be told at once of this news. A great horde of squaw men, bad white men, and rascals will pour into our reservation as soon as the discovery of this metal is announced. They will carry off our ponies, and do us damage in many ways. The question is, Shall we prevent it, or shall we allow them to come here? I for one am in favour of notifying the Great Father at Washington to keep his people out of our region, unless he wants to see them killed."

"You surely would not make war against the whites," said Wanneta. "They have done much for us by educating our children in their schools. The white man is very strong, and it would take many more people than we have to drive him out of the country. It is very foolish to talk of keeping him from going wherever he wishes. The best way to settle this matter is to have the agent here inquire who it is that is invading this territory,

and then report all their names to the Great Father. He will have his soldiers drive them out. I beg of you to make no haste in this matter, and not to try to expel those who come into our territory for fear it may provoke war with the whites."

"My daughter," said Two Bears, "we are only talking this matter over, and do not intend to act rashly. Your fears are groundless, for Chief Gopher and myself know exactly what is necessary to be done. You must not interfere in these matters. I know that it is customary for the white man's squaw to council with him, but with us the Indian maiden must be seen and not heard. You must not interfere, my dear child."

This rebuke did not greatly please Wanneta, but she remained silent for some time.

Gopher and Two Bears discussed the question of the rumoured invasion by the whites at considerable length. Gopher, who was the greater talker of the two, would have been glad to have continued the conversation until after midnight, but his host saw fit to terminate the pow-wow before that hour. So when the time came when he wished to turn in, he unceremoniously told his guest to depart, and began arranging his bed of hides.

There is little etiquette among the Indians, and telling a guest that it is time to go home is not considered improper. So Chief Gopher did not feel at all hurt at his unceremonious dismissal, and, getting up, bade his friend good-night and strode out of the door of the tipi.

The next morning Wanneta went over to see her lover, and met at the tipi the squaw man, Richards. Richards

said that it would not be necessary for him to make another visit to Strong Heart, as he was now able to walk about and use his left arm a little. Richards said further, with a smile and a chuckle, "I reckon, young girl, that your friend can now go to your own lodge to see you. He is able to get about almost as well as you can. I suppose you are very glad that your odious duties in this little hospital are over."

At this he burst out laughing, and started for another part of the village to see how some of those wounded in the last fight with the Crows were getting on.

"Wanneta," said Strong Heart, "let us walk to the creek and sit in the shade of a cottonwood. I will smoke while you talk to me. I want to be out in the fresh air, and do not care to stay shut up in the tipi any longer than necessary."

So together they walked to the bank of the stream, and there sat down on the very edge of the moss-covered brink and looked into the waters below them. Above, the branches of the tall, stately cottonwoods stretched out toward the sky, while a dense foliage of large heavy leaves formed an effective screen from the rays of the hot June sun.

"Dear Strong Heart," said Wanneta, "you will be well enough to ride your pony, hunt, and go about as you used, in two weeks."

"I am certain," said Strong Heart, "that in one week I can use my arm enough to hunt a little, and in a month I shall be as strong as I ever was. Richards says this, and there is no doubting his word."

"Richards has been very good to you," said Wanneta. "What do you intend to give him for his services?"

"Father gave me a good horse for him, and the next time that I see him, I will go to the corral and present him with the pony. That will be pay enough."

Wanneta thought, as she looked across the stream at the fringe of timber upon the other side, of the young man who sat beside her, and wondered whether he would propose a date for their marriage. As he was nearly well now, and would soon be entirely well, this important matter should surely be settled. He sat in moody silence, blowing great clouds of blue smoke from his catlinite pipe, high above his head. He, too, was thinking of the same subject as the Indian maiden beside him, and wondering if she would consent to have it announced to the tribe that they were to put up their own tipi.

When two young people are thinking of the same thing, especially if the matter lies near their hearts, it does not take them long to come to an understanding. Indians, especially, are the most abrupt and decisive people in the world. There are few long courtships among them. Seldom, if ever, does one occur. Often young people are married within two weeks after their first meeting.

"Wanneta," said Strong Heart, at last breaking the silence, "I cannot wait much longer for you to become my squaw. The hours of each day drag by their tedious length. I sit and smoke, and try to amuse myself when you are away, but I fail. As our young men say, my

heart is gone, another has stolen it. Strive as I may, I cannot live without you, and the sooner we put up our tipi and you become my squaw, the better it will be for me and, I trust, for you. In one week from now, I shall be well enough to get about and do light work. Will you not have your father announce to the tribe that in six days from this morning you will go to housekeeping, as the white man says?"

"Yes, I will," replied Wanneta. "I have been thinking of this matter also, and I, too, am lonely when not with you. I should not care to put off our tipi-building longer than six or seven days."

The young girl blushed as she said this, but looking up into the noble face of her future husband, regained her composure and confidence, and allowed him to place his arm around her waist and caress her as lovers are wont to do.

As they sat upon the ground, forgetting all else but their love, they little knew that from the opposite bank a pair of black, revengeful eyes were intently fastened upon them, and that a mind full of jealousy and hatred was observing their every movement. The person who from a secure hiding-place watched the two lovers was none other than Spotted Eagle. He had ventured in a spirit of recklessness, well knowing the danger to which he was exposed, from the Crow camp, on purpose to learn the fate of Wa-da-ha, see how his rival fared, and also to ascertain what Wanneta was doing. He had seen them when they came out to the bank and sat down, for he had been watching the village for some time. As they talked

and laughed he became more and more jealous, until at last, in a fit of passion, he put his Winchester to his shoulder, and would have fired. But at this moment a party of armed Sioux appeared, starting out on a hunting excursion to the east. Knowing that if he fired he would be killed beyond a doubt, he reluctantly lowered his rifle, and crawling to the place where his pony was tethered, leaped upon the animal's back, and keeping well under cover of trees and underbrush, passed safely beyond the village and up the river. Having crossed the stream, when he was far enough away to make it safe he made his way back to the Crow camp, where he acquainted the chief, Black Elk, with what he had learned. From the talk of the village, the sound of which had reached him across the water, he knew of Wa-da-ha's death. Black Elk, upon hearing his story, called a council to determine whether an attack should be made upon the Sioux village; but as their last expedition had resulted so disastrously, it was decided to do nothing. Spotted Eagle was therefore unable to realize his hopes, and sat in his tipi day after day, sulking and grumbling. He imagined he could see Wanneta the squaw of Strong Heart. The very thought of this made him so furious that he began to treat his own squaw, Allaha, very cruelly. In fact, his treatment of his wife became so well known that her father one day stepped into the tipi of his son-in-law, and catching the young man unarmed and at a disadvantage, gave him a most merciless beating with a short, heavy strap of buffalo hide. This brought Spotted Eagle to his senses. Thereafter he lived with his wife in harmony, and soon settled down to a

steady life, and ere long won back the good opinion of the Crow nation.

Wanneta and Strong Heart talked of their love, little dreaming what a narrow escape from sudden death they had had.

The week passed very rapidly, the time being spent by each in getting together the necessary articles with which to furnish the tipi. Strong Heart brought Wanneta some bear and buffalo robes. They were partially tanned, but needed some additional work before they were in a fit condition for service. These, with the help of her mother, she fringed with red flannel, and decorated here and there with strings of beads. In this way she adapted them for use as coverings for their couch and as seats for visitors. The large buffalo robes, which were to be used in building the tipi, were presented by Two Bears. Upon their inner and smooth side Strong Heart, with Wanneta's aid, drew pictures to illustrate to passers-by his exploits with the Crows and his success as a hunter.

He drew a rude scene, wherein was depicted a young man and maiden in a cave, furiously assaulted by many painted warriors, wearing upon their heads feathers, and upon their bodies marks denoting that they belonged to the Crows.

Another scene showed a rush of savages up a narrow ledge, where the young man, standing just outside the entrance of his retreat, killed many of his enemies. The next portrayed a heap of enemies lying upon the rocky ledge, the blood pouring from many bullet-holes, and reddening the stones around with a crimson hue. The

next showed the young man in the arms of the maiden, he himself wounded, the blood gushing from a frightful wound in his shoulder over the girl's lap. In the last scene the faces of the two are full of joy, for down below the Sioux horsemen are charging up the rocky defile, and the enemies are being hotly pursued. A small picture standing in prominence upon the buffalo hide represented a burning building, with a number of Indians encircling it, and discharging arrows and bullets in showers upon its walls and upon its roof.

Thus was the tipi of Strong Heart and Wanneta decorated, and right beautiful did it look to Indian eyes. No modern painting would appeal to us half so much as would these rudely portrayed characters, to those who drew them and to those who saw them also. The warrior who was entitled to place these upon his tipi told no lie, and did not boast unduly as he thus vaunted his bravery. He had earned the right, and it was as expressive to him as is the medal or the diploma to one who in civilized communities has achieved so great a success in the arts or in the sciences as to win the applause and admiration of his fellow-men. Paintings such as these convey to the Sioux the same idea as the epaulets of a general do to us; for the warrior has earned by hard service his right to represent his victories as has the general the right to wear his shoulder-straps.

At last there broke the morning of a day long to be remembered by Wanneta and Strong Heart. They were above the average intelligence of their tribe, and knew well the serious nature of the step they were taking.

They did not enter upon it with the carelessness Indians usually display at such a time. The ceremony was very short and simple. Strong Heart and his mother had selected one of the most beautiful sites in the village for the tipi, had planted the centre pole and stretched the others around it, braced them at the top, and then had taken the centre pole away. They had stretched the buffalo hides tightly around the frame-work, with their decorations outward, where all could see them. This was all that they had done, save to pile the blankets and gifts in a promiscuous heap in the centre of the lodge.

The sun had not been up long before every one was astir in the entire camp, and, as soon as the morning meal had been eaten, there stepped from the lodge of Rain-in-the-face a young man, clad in all his finery, who walked, with rapid strides and head erect, to the lodge of his intended bride. He wore in his hair many eagle feathers, and carried in his hand, for good luck, a little medicine-bag filled with strange herbs which his mother had given him. This he was to hang high above their heads in the wigwam, and was never to open it to ascertain what it contained. Reaching the lodge of his loved one, he walked directly to the doorway, and calling to Two Bears, said:

"Father, I have come for your daughter." Then, turning and peering into the darkness within, said to his sweetheart: "Your husband awaits your coming."

Half shyly, and not without embarrassment, the maiden advanced, and stood in the entrance a moment before

joining her husband. Her mother came forward also, as did the braves of the family.

"Good-bye, my dear mother," said Wanneta, tears springing to her eyes for a moment. Regaining her composure, she added: "May the Great Spirit, Waukantauka, he who watches over us all, the God of the white man and the God of the Sioux, guard and keep my father and mother, my brother and sister. Make our home yours, and come to see us often."

She caught up her little sister, Minnehaha, pressed her to her breast, kissed her; then turning, embraced her mother, her father, and her brother, John Runner; then turning to Strong Heart, she said: "My husband, we will go."

Strong Heart took her hand, and, leading her out of the entrance, turned to her father and mother, and said:

"Two Bears, you are my father; Omaha, you are my mother now; John Runner, you are my brother; Minnehaha, you are my sister,"—and he grasped each hand in turn with a warmness that denoted that the words he spoke were sincere.

"You have given me your daughter," he continued, "and I will be a good husband to her. Come and see us often. Remember that Strong Heart is ready to do whatever his squaw's father and mother may desire, and that when old age shall come upon them, if Great Waukantauka permits us to live, he will stand by and protect, provide, and love, as long as strength remains in his arm and he has an eye to see. Good-bye, all. Come, Wanneta, let us go."

Turning away, he led her to their new tipi, while the Indians of the village, who had come to escort the couple to their abode, cheered and shouted in honour of the occasion. Some ran forward with little gifts, others wished the couple good luck. Taken all together, the reception was one which few young men and women in the Sioux nation had the honour to receive.

They walked to their tipi amid the good wishes of the entire village. The wedding-march was the shouts of the assembled throng; the ceremony was the few words that were spoken at the bride's home. The hymns sung were the songs of the birds in the trees above; the flowers offered were the wild roses and prairie blossoms which grew in profusion along the river-bank. Swaying in the gentle wind as the two passed, they seemed to say: "Good luck, good luck."

Having led his bride to the lodge, and the ceremony being over, they laid aside their finery and put on their every-day clothes. They set about putting the interior of the lodge in order, and, lighting the fire, made the things present as home-like an appearance as possible.

The days rolled by in perfect happiness, and the young couple spent the next two weeks as men and women spend their honeymoon, whether made man and wife by bishop or joined by mutual consent, as are the children of the forest. Happiness is not always found in cities, nor does contentment lurk where wealth and luxury hold their sway. The Indian may be cruel to his enemies and take delight in deeds of violence, but he loves as sincerely as we do, and his fireside has attrac-

tions which are to him so dear, that he would not exchange them for the home of the millionaire. His wild, free life, and his constant communion with Nature, give him a spirit which places a strong veto upon any life but one in the open air.

So Wanneta and Strong Heart, in their simple abode, were as happy and contented as it was possible for any to be. Probably the value of all their possessions would have been less than three hundred dollars, yet they would not have traded their couch of bear skins for costly silks. The frail walls which were to shelter them against the fury of the northern blizzard were dear to them, and they preferred a home among their people, with its pleasant stream near by, to any other spot of ground east of the Mississippi River.

They lived on for the next few weeks in perfect happiness. Certainly they had suffered and seen more than is common to the lot of man or woman, and they sincerely hoped that their lives would be cast in pleasant places, and that the excitement and danger of conflicts with their enemies would be no more experienced.

CHAPTER XIV.

CUSTER'S MARCH THROUGH THE BLACK HILLS.

THERE was a scene of excitement in the lodge of Rain-in-the-face. Two Bears, John Runner, John Richards, Gopher, the chief himself, and a half dozen head warriors, were crowded into the narrow space enclosed within the walls, and were engaged in a heated argument.

"Richards," said Rain-in-the-face, "tell us now, from beginning to end, what the agent said."

John Richards cleared his throat, and began in the Sioux tongue to narrate a series of events which had taken place in the last few days, and which had reached a climax during the few hours before this conference.

"You know," began Richards, "that when the Crows attacked our women and children, and your son and his squaw, six weeks ago, the agent said he would notify the Great Father at Washington of what had happened."

"Yes," grunted the chief and others; "go on."

"Well," resumed Richards, "the agent sent, as soon as this happened, for material and men to construct new buildings. You know how we cared for him during the time that this was coming, how we gave him food and tipis for himself and his family. The men and the lumber and other things needed were brought over from the railroad three weeks ago. They have the buildings well

under way, and the agent has just moved up there, and is living in a half-completed house at the present time."

"Yes," grunted the Indians present.

"You know, also, that several weeks ago there was a rumour that gold-hunters had come fifty miles south of us, and were beginning to look for the precious mineral which the white men love so much, and for the possession of which they will risk their lives and fortunes. These white men have found gold, and have sent reports among their fellows in the towns of their discoveries, and it will not be long before many other white men will come into this region.

"The agent notified the Great Father of the course he had taken, but the Great Father, who has so much to think of and so many things to do, misunderstood and thought that the Sioux had burned the agency buildings, because the Long Knives had invaded their reservation. He did not know that it was the Crows who had done the mischief. The Great Father, therefore, told his army officers to move near our reservation, and see that no injury was done to the gold-hunters who might come into it.

"I told the agent that we did not want the Great Father to misunderstand us, and that he must at once send word to the railroad that the soldiers must keep the white men out of our country, or that there would be trouble. The agent laughed at me, and said that the white men must get gold, whether they came upon the reservation or not, and that, while he would send word to the Great Father when he had time, he could not bother

to do so then. He told me to go back and tell Rain-in-the-face that it would turn out all right, and that there need be no uneasiness on the part of any of the Indians.

"Now, chief, I am a white man, as you know, but I have done much for your tribe. I want to see the Sioux nation prosper. You cannot allow these men to get into your reservation without great injury to our people. They will bring fire-water and many other things with them to destroy our health and impair our strength. They will establish towns along the river and in every fertile spot, will shoot our game, and kill the young men upon the least provocation. Therefore, it will be well to send John Runner as fast as possible to the railroad station, and give him money of our own, to have a message sent by the swift messenger which flies along the strings the white man has put up, telling the Great Father to withdraw the gold-hunters from our reservation at once. I have done."

"You see," said Rain-in-the-face, "what is going to happen. These white men have come to seek gold. They must not be allowed upon our reservation. Richards has spoken the truth. I will send John Runner on a fleet pony with money to send word to the Great Father by the swift messenger, of this invasion, and will ask that it be stopped at once." Turning to John Runner, the chief said, "Get your swiftest horse and come to the lodge instantly."

John Runner strode out of the wigwam and, uttering a series of sharp, loud yells to inform the people of the unusual proceeding, dashed at his best speed to the corral,

selected the pony, and returned to the chief's tipi. Rain-in-the-face and Gopher gave him several silver dollars, and, taking a piece of smooth buck-skin, wrote in the Indian sign language the following dispatch, to be transmitted by the telegraph operator:

"GENERAL GRANT, President of the United States:

"White man coming into Sioux reservation. Wants gold. Soldiers think we set fire to agency. Crows set fire to agency, We are good Indians. Make soldiers drive white men out of our reservation. If soldiers and white men come through reservation they will be killed. Sioux very angry.

"*Chiefs Rain-in-the-face and Sitting Bull.*"

John Runner leaped upon his pony and set out. It was near noon when he started, and it was the next morning when he reached the station. He read to the operator the message, and it was sent forthwith. Then he leaped upon his horse and turned his face homeward.

When the dispatch was received in Washington, the officials laughed over it, not knowing of what great importance it was to the Sioux nation. It lay upon the table of the Secretary of War several days, and was officially pronounced by one of the Indian fighters to be the work of some squaw man and of no importance. This same Indian fighter told the Secretary that the Sioux had caused the destruction of the agency buildings, and that they were very hostile to all the whites in the northwest portion of Dakota. The Secretary concluded that it would be best to send the brave and dashing General Custer, through the heart of the Sioux country, into the

region then attracting so much attention, known as the Black Hills. The matter was referred to one of his subordinates, and General Custer was duly notified to march through the Indians' land and reduce all hostile tribes. Thus was the plea of the Sioux nation treated in Washington. Little did the officials who signed the orders dream what would be the cost to the United States in human lives and valuable property of their careless action.

On the departure of John Runner, the chief called a council, to be held that afternoon. Those who were at his tipi left for their homes, and told their neighbours what had been done. There was great excitement throughout the camp in consequence, and that afternoon there was an enormous gathering at the large council-house. The matters at stake were of such vital importance that even Sioux women were present. Those who could not crowd into the building stood outside. Those in the doorway repeated what was said to those without, and thus all were acquainted with the details of each speech.

In a council where a question of war or peace is brought up, there is no smoking, nor do the Indians come decked in feathers and covered with war-paint, as many suppose, but each enters, takes his place according to rank in the house with great dignity and solemnity. Were the question to be decided one as to whether a battle were inevitable, each might possibly deck himself with paint and feathers, and display upon his cheek the symbol of death, the black hand.

When all were seated, Rain-in-the-face arose slowly and grandly, and after looking about him with great deliberation, began a speech, in which he laid before the nation the point at issue:

"Brothers of the Sioux nation, I have explained to you what has happened south of us, and I now wish to call your attention to the action of our agent here. He has just told me that the Secretary of War has sent him word that no Sioux must leave the reservation—that the soldiers are coming to drive out the gold-hunters and restore order. The agent has informed me, further, that our hunting must be confined to our own reservation,"—at this a heavy grunt of disapproval, given by several hundred voices, nearly drowned the tones of the speaker,—"and that we must not deal violently with any white men who may come upon our reservation. He says that the trespassers will be driven off as soon as the soldiers come, but that, until then, we must suffer them to come among us without interfering in the slightest.

"Now, people of the Sioux nation, listen. The agent seems to have acted without much thought in the matter, and, from his remarks, I judge that he does not much care whether we are driven from our hunting-grounds or not, and is somewhat pleased at the prospect of the whites invading our territory. Until I have further proof that he is not friendly toward us, I wish all Sioux to treat him as in the past. Should it prove that he is careless and indifferent to our rights, I would advise that nothing be bought of him, and that we accept our annuities, but do not patronize his store.

"The course of action that we are to observe, in case the whites come into this section, depends entirely upon what the Great Father says. If the Great Father says the whites shall be driven out, we must do nothing. If the Great Father says that our reservation will be open for settlement, and sends the soldiers to protect the white men as they come in, we shall have to take the matter into our own hands, and defend our rights. I have done."

At the completion of the chief's speech there was a grunt of approval at his words, and then a considerable pause. At length Gopher arose to his feet, and addressed the assembled multitude in a few words, as follows:

"My people, you have heard the words of Rain-in-the face. I agree with him in what he says. Should the whites invade our territory, and the Great Father take no action in the matter, then we must put on our war-paint, take our rifles and defend our homes from these villains, who would take all we have, and then kick us out to shift as best we may. You know that we subsist mainly upon the buffalo. When he is gone, we shall have nothing upon which to live, and will be forced to starve or to fight. The hide-hunters are rapidly exterminating our game, and it is only a question of time before it will have entirely disappeared."

Strong Heart had been present during the council, and listened in silence as a number spoke. At last he arose and, nodding toward his father, addressed the assembly. A murmur of approval went through the audience when he did this, for there were many there who loved the

young man, and who knew what his impulsive nature would permit him to say.

"Chiefs and young men of the Sioux nation: You have listened to a report which tells you of the invasion of your reservation without just cause by the pale-faces. They are at present miles south of you, but, wishing to get more gold, they may even pass by our village and locate in the Bad Lands north of us. Should they fall in the hands of the Crows, they would undoubtedly meet punishment which would greatly gratify us; but if this were to happen, the crime might be laid at our doors, as in the case of the burning of the agency buildings. Therefore be careful what you do, that you bring not the wrath of the Great Father at Washington upon your heads. If matters come to the worst, join me and fight as long as there is hope, but until then be patient."

After the speech of Strong Heart the council adjourned, and the men of the village gathered in groups in the lodges of the more important individuals in the tribe, to discuss the chances of war with the Long Knives.

John Runner returned two days later, and reported that some fifty white men were encamped in the Bad Lands to the south. He said that there were no soldiers with them, and that, while they were a rough-looking set, they showed no ill-will toward him, and talked with him on his return trip for several hours. They declared their intention of dividing the party, some of them going northwest, while the others moved a few miles east to a more favourable situation.

Three days after the return of John Runner half a dozen

white horsemen dashed into the Sioux camp; their horses were covered with foam and showed signs of great fatigue. The men tumbled from their backs and related to the squaw men of the tribe, and others who could speak English, a terrible story.

Twenty-one of the whites left the others the morning that John Runner passed them, and moved until late that night to the north-west. They had travelled nearly sixty miles when a large body of Crows, who were starting out to hunt, saw them go into camp, and attacked them at daylight the next morning. They had time to get on their horses, but the Crows, being better mounted, overtook them, and a running fight of nearly thirty miles ensued. They lost all their men, some being killed, others captured, except the six who had escaped. These, by hard riding, managed to reach the Sioux camp with the news of the disaster. One of their number was seriously wounded, and although much was done for him by Richards and the new medicine-man, the fatigue and excitement of the long ride so aggravated his wound that he died during the night. The other five were given fresh horses, and, after burying the body of their comrade, returned to their camp full of gratitude to the Sioux, and promising that no harm should come to their nation, and that the whole camp of miners should move without delay from the limits of the Sioux reservation.

Disheartened at their defeat, the prospectors for gold retreated to the Missouri River and camped near the railroad. The news of the massacre spread rapidly, and, about the time the War Department ordered General

Custer into the field, it reached Washington. As predicted by their chiefs, it was reported to the officers in charge of the United States army that the Sioux had committed this atrocity, and General Custer was telegraphed to without further delay:

"Enter the hostile country and subdue the Sioux who dare murder inoffensive citizens."

General Custer had won a great reputation among the Indians, and was regarded by them as the bravest and most successful fighter in the service of the government. This reputation, and the decision of the tribe to offer no violence unless absolutely necessary, enabled him to go on his famous march through the very heart of the Indian country without firing a single shot. He started from the Missouri River, in south-eastern Dakota, and marched straight through to the north of the Black Hills, made a wide detour, and then swung around toward the West and bore back toward his starting-point. He had several hundred men, well mounted, plenty of provisions, and all the ammunition necessary. The first intimation that the Indians received of this march was the news brought in by a party of hunters who were out some thirty miles south-east of the camp. They had seen an enormous cloud of dust, and thinking it was buffalo, galloped to a ridge near by in order to observe the movements and extent of the herd. Judge of their surprise and consternation at beholding three hundred and fifty cavalrymen, led by the renowned Long Hair, moving in good order northward. They watched the column for a few moments, and then retreated cautiously, until they had

placed several miles of broken country between themselves and the whites, when they lashed their ponies into a dead run, and flew across the prairie with unabated speed until they arrived at the Sioux camp.

One dashed to the chief's lodge, another to the council-house, and a third rode through the village, crying out the startling news: "Three hundred whites are marching up the valley, led by Long Hair, with two big guns and many rifles. They are mounted on cavalry horses, and look as though they meant to fight."

Some ran to the council-house, while others crowded around the messengers. Rain-in-the-face rushed out, and sounded the war-whoop in all its fearfulness. Hastily calling John Runner, he charged him to ride for his life to Sitting Bull's camp, and notify him what was happening, and to tell him to send messengers every few hours to their camp, in order that each might keep informed of the other's movements. Rain-in-the-face charged his warriors to begin no hostilities unless the whites should offer to attack, but to see that their arms were in good condition, and to be ready to jerk down their tipis and to move to Sitting Bull's village at an hour's notice. He told Gopher and Strong Heart to mount their best ponies and take a white flag, such as the Long Knives would recognize. They were to intercept the column and hold a conference with Long Hair.

While these preparations were going on in the village, the two messengers rode post-haste toward the southeast, to meet the Long Knives and ascertain their intentions. They had gone twenty-five miles only, when they

came in sight of the column. From the direction in which it was marching, they saw that it would pass to the east of their village, and would not discover its whereabouts, unless notified by the agent, or unless some one of the scouts should tell them where to look for it.

The two horsemen with the white flag rode boldly down the ridge and advanced to meet General Custer. Seeing them coming, he sent out two orderlies to meet them. They stopped when within a hundred yards of each other, and Strong Heart, who was to act as spokesman, cried out in fair English, "What do you here? Is General Custer there? I wish to speak with him."

"If you are unarmed," replied one of the orderlies, "we will conduct you to General Custer, and you may speak with him."

Laying their rifles upon the ground, they approached the general. He advanced from the column to meet them, and they held a parley lasting for some little time.

"General Custer," said Strong Heart, "you are on our reservation with a large armed force, and we see that you have come here for a purpose. What is that purpose?"

"I come at the order of the Great Father," replied the general, "who wishes to have the Sioux distinctly understand that they cannot burn agencies and kill white men without being punished."

"We did not burn the agency, nor have we killed any white men," replied Strong Heart. "My squaw and myself and the agent, who will tell you the same story, were in the buildings when they were attacked by a thousand Crows. They set fire to the buildings, and had not Sit-

ting Bull and his warriors come from the north we should have all been killed. He drove the Crows away. The village of white men below here was not broken up by us. Twenty-one of them went north-west in search of gold near the Crow village. The Crows surprised them and killed all but six. These six came to our camp in great fear. We cared for them, gave them good horses, and sent them back to their people. They will tell you themselves that it is true. What we came for is to find out why you are invading our reservation without just cause, and why the Great Father at Washington does not drive the gold-hunters out."

"You seem," replied Custer, "to be speaking the truth. I must see the agent at your reservation and talk with him. If he says that you have told the truth, I will report to the Great Father that you are good Indians and should be left alone. If I receive orders to drive the white men out, I will do so. I will not attack you, but will see the agent. Go back to your people, and tell them that I will not attack them, but must see the agent." With that, Custer rode back to the column, and the Indians, satisfied with the interview, picked up their arms and returned to the camp as fast as their tired ponies could bear them.

The council was in session when they returned, and the news that they brought was received with shouts of delight. Runners were dispatched to Sitting Bull's camp with the intelligence, and all were greatly gratified that Long Hair meant no harm to them. Many of the warriors went to the agency to learn what the result of the interview between the agent and General Custer would be.

CHAPTER XV.

THE ILLNESS OF MINNEHAHA.

THE Sioux warriors started for the agency buildings the next morning in large numbers. They left their wives and children at home, and only the more prominent braves, the chiefs, and the young men of standing were permitted to go to the conference.

Strong Heart was in attendance at the council of the night before, and consequently knew thoroughly all that was done. His wife was at home, anxiously awaiting his return, and impatient to learn what course her people would adopt in so important a matter. She was not kept long in suspense, for her husband, as soon as he could leave, rushed from the council, and running quickly to the tipi, burst through the entrance, and told in a few rapid sentences all that had taken place.

"Strong Heart," said she, "promise me that you will not take up arms against the whites unless they invade our territory and do our people injury. A simple invasion, if no injury is done, should not call for hostility on our part. Do nothing rash, dear husband, and consider well before you join the young men of the nation in any wild scheme.

"I have been, as you know, in the white man's land many, many moons, and I have seen his strength, how he

lives in great cities, how many warriors he has, and how many guns. I have seen houses so large that many hundred people live in one; therefore listen to the advice of your squaw, dear husband, and do not take up arms against the Long Knives without just cause and without due consideration."

"Dear Wanneta," said Strong Heart, "I will do as you wish. If you could have heard my speech in the council-house to the young men, you would have seen that you have no reason for fear. I said there almost the same things that you have said, and cautioned our people against any hasty action. Therefore rest easy as to my actions.

"The Long Knives will stop at the agency for two days or longer, and will hold a pow-wow with our people. You must not be anxious if I am there all that time, for I must have a long talk with Long Hair and tell him of the wishes of our people. We all hope that this conference will result in driving out the gold-hunters, and the withdrawal of the troops from our reservation.

"Long Hair is a famous fighter, and has won many battles over the various Indian tribes throughout the United States. He is a great man, and will undoubtedly do all he promises."

The husband and wife remained in the tipi conversing for half an hour or longer. Strong Heart then left her and went to his father's lodge to learn if there was any news. He remained there some time, and then visited several parts of the camp.

The runners from Sitting Bull came in at various times

during the evening and night. Most of the warriors remained in and about the council-house until morning to hear the news, in case any was brought from him, and to talk over the situation. When John Runner returned from the upper Sioux camp near daylight, he brought word that Sitting Bull with fifty braves was coming in person to consult with Rain-in-the-face.

Upon the arrival of the delegation another council was held. Soon after taking a light breakfast of dried beef and corn cakes, several hundred warriors mounted their ponies and rode to the agency. General Custer and his command had arrived after dark the night before, and while his men were resting the general held a consultation with the agent, who told of the kindness of the Sioux toward himself and the distressed white men. This moved General Custer greatly, and he resolved to telegraph his superior officers in Washington of the friendliness of these people, and at the same time warn the Secretary not to anger them and cause them to take up the hatchet. He knew well the dauntless courage of the Sioux, and wished if possible to avert bloodshed.

About eight o'clock in the morning the chiefs and warriors of the Sioux nation arrived and advanced within a hundred yards of the agency buildings. The main body of the Indians stood near, close enough to hear most of the conversation that passed. The general and his staff came forward to meet the Indians, accompanied by the agent. After considerable hand-shaking, Custer opened the conversation by saying:

"Chiefs Sitting Bull and Rain-in-the-face, you have

come to talk with me upon an important matter, and I trust that we shall reach an understanding without difficulty." An interpreter translated each sentence to the Indians as the general spoke. "Your agent has informed me that the Crows caused the burning of the buildings. This had been laid to your door. He has also told me of your kind treatment of himself, his family, and employees, and the brotherly way in which you received the six white men who alone escaped out of the terrible massacre by the Crows. I have just sent two messengers to the railroad station to telegraph the Great Father in Washington these facts, and it will be only a few days before all will be right. The men who have invaded your reservation are in search of that precious metal, gold, which to the white man is so valuable. I trust you will not disturb them, and that they will be allowed to pass through your lands."

Sitting Bull and Rain-in-the-face looked at each other a moment, then turning to the interpreter, Sitting Bull drew himself up to his full height, looked about him, and with his usual deliberation began a speech:

"Chief Long Hair, we have listened to what you have to say, and are glad that the news of our good feeling has been sent to the Great Father. But there is one thing which you do not appreciate or understand. The men who have come upon our reservation seek to injure us by killing our game and driving us from our land. Understand, Chief Long Hair, that they have not driven us from our land yet, but if they are allowed to stay, it will be a question of time only before they do drive

us out. Therefore I wish to impress upon you this fact: The history of every Indian tribe that has allowed the Long Knives to invade their reservations without protest is brief, and its recital is full of sadness and despair. You know as well as I do what will be the result, if our people allow the pale-faces to enter our domains.

"Chief Long Hair, you are a great Indian fighter. You have fought occasionally with some of our people, and you have generally been successful. You can see we come to you as suppliants, although it is not the custom of the Sioux nation to ask favours from any one. We come, I repeat, to ask that these whites be driven out. If they are not driven out I cannot promise safety for them, for the young men of our nation are bent upon war, and will not countenance the invasion of their favourite hunting-grounds. We have the right on our side, and great Waukantauka will aid our arms; therefore, oh Chief, dismiss your army and listen to my words of wisdom. I have done."

General Custer consulted his officers a few moments, and then replied to Sitting Bull:

"It is impossible to withdraw the troops without orders from the Great Father, and it is likewise impracticable to force the whites from your reservation. Do nothing rash, Sitting Bull; restrain your young men, and wait a few days until you shall have heard from me again. I leave for the north, and will march above the Black Hills, around to the west, and then back to the railroad. Send a runner to the railroad fourteen days from to-morrow. I will be there at that time, or at least within one or two

days. Word will have been received from the Great Father, and you will then know his decision."

The chiefs talked among themselves several minutes, and then Rain-in-the-face said: "Chief Long Hair, we will not molest these gold-hunters until you have arrived at the railroad, provided they do not steal our ponies or shoot any of our young men. If they do this the agreement does not hold good, and you may expect trouble. We regret very much your seeming unwillingness to promise us redress from our wrongs. Considering all we have permitted the Long Knives to do, it is unbecoming one of your fame to promise nothing definite in such an emergency. Go on your march northward, but do not permit your soldiers to take any of our horses. We are not satisfied with your promises."

The chief, at the end of this remark, walked nervously back and forth, muttering to himself. General Custer saw that no good could come of prolonging the interview further, and so shaking hands once more, he turned to his officers and gave orders to saddle.

The Indians drew together and began talking among themselves. The cavalry mounted and moved in good order toward the north, the gallant Custer, with his long hair waving in the wind, moving on ahead. As the heavy horses lumbered out of sight, the Indians mounted their light fleet ponies and returned, disappointed and disheartened that the general had not at once turned back and removed the whites from the reservation.

The chiefs, upon reaching the camp, entered the tipi of Rain-in-the-face. It was hardly thought necessary to call

a council, for every one was thoroughly acquainted with the situation, and little could be done until some new move on the part of the whites should call for action. Strong Heart did not go to his father's lodge, but to his own. His wife saw from his downcast face that the interview had been an unpleasant one, so she tenderly threw her arms about his neck and drew him to a seat upon the bear-skins, saying, "Tell me all about it."

He told her what had taken place, and she listened to every word with great anxiety. While they were in the midst of their talk, Omaha entered the lodge.

"Wanneta, come to our lodge at once. Bring with you some of the medicine which was so powerful to restore Strong Heart to health, and see if it will not bring back the smile to the face of your little sister, Minnehaha, and the bright flashes to her eyes. She was taken sick two days ago, and seems very feverish. I have not sent for Gopher's son, the medicine-man, knowing that your medicine might be of more avail than his. Do not delay, but come at once."

Wanneta rose quickly from her seat, and taking several bottles from a little medicine-chest, hurried with her mother, to see her little sick sister. Strong Heart thought his presence unnecessary, and lighting his pipe, leaned back for a quiet siesta.

Wanneta saw at a glance that Minnehaha was very ill. The little girl had been playing along the edge of the stream, where the Indian children went nearly every day. She had slipped and fallen into the water, and had she been as strong and healthy as her playmates, the accident

would have had no serious results. But she was a rather delicate child, and took a severe cold from the wetting. She continued to play and romp all day, often getting overheated, and then sitting down in the shade still clad in her wet clothes. The exposure was too much for her, and she caught a heavy cold, which soon became a raging fever.

Wanneta drew near her little bed, and knelt beside her, so that she might ask questions as to her condition and give her such medicine as she might need.

"I am glad to see you, sister Wanneta," said the little sufferer. "You will stay with me a while, won't you?" and she looked up into the face of her kind-hearted sister, with a most piteous expression.

"Yes, Minnehaha, I have come to bring you strong medicine, good medicine, which will speedily make you well again. You must take it whenever mother tells you to, and must lie still and be patient like a good girl."

"Yes, sister, I will take the medicine and will lie still. You must come and see me often, for I get very lonely here in the tipi. Do not leave me long, Wanneta."

Wanneta held Minnehaha's hand and told her several little stories to amuse her, and if possible make her forget the burning of the fever. She stayed with her sister nearly two hours. When the time came for her to return to her own lodge, she smoothed the hot brow and kissed the parched lips, and then, with a parting instruction for the little one to take plenty of cold water, she went home.

Nearly all Indian wars have been caused by the foolish

and thoughtless action of some white man, or by some broken treaty. The Indians are always blamed for what follows, but are themselves seldom the originators of any serious troubles. The man who caused all that was to follow was a mail-carrier, sent from General Custer's command, when a day's march from the agency, to take letters and papers to the railroad, far to the south, in order to have them forwarded to Washington. The carrier was accompanied by a veterinary surgeon. They passed Sitting Bull's camp safely, and were coming in sight of Rain-in-the-face's village when the disaster occurred. Within a half mile of it, two young men, armed for a hunting excursion, galloped out toward them, intending to pass a little to their left, on the way to the Bad Lands. The mail-carrier and the doctor evidently mistook the designs of these two men, for no sooner had the Indians come within speaking distance, than the doctor raised his rifle, and shot the foremost through the forehead. His comrade, seeing this, covered the doctor with his Winchester and shot him through the heart, and a half second later shot the mail-carrier through the head. The carrier had raised his rifle at the first report, but was killed before he could discharge it.

As soon as the pistol shots were heard, the Indians poured forth from their tipis in great numbers, and rushed to the scene of the tragedy. It did not take long to reach the spot where lay the dead white men and the Indian. The bodies were placed upon horses, and were carried to the camp. Some one led the three horses to the open square at the council-house, others ran to inform the chief

of what had happened. In less time than it takes to write it there was a gathering of angry men at the council. They looked upon the bodies of the slain as they passed into the council-chamber. Some were in favour of sending the scalps at once to the whites, others counselled prudence. Many scarcely knew what to do.

The body of the dead Indian was given over to his family, and his squaw and son bore it away with loud wailings to their tipi, where they prepared it for burial. Then in solemn procession they visited the scaffolds in the trees that fringed the stream, and gave the departed brave a last resting-place among the fallen of his nation.

Some zealous brave, wishing to achieve notoriety, scalped the two white men, and having then rifled them of what valuables they bore about them, tumbled the bodies into the waters of the stream, and left them to the mercy of the currents.

At the council the young man who had done the shooting testified that he had acted in self-defense. Those present accepted his statement without questioning him, and the whole matter, so far as he was concerned, having been settled, Chiefs Rain-in-the-face and Sitting Bull made a few remarks to the assembled natives, in which they told them to stand by their people and protect their homes, but not to commit any crimes.

"Friends," said Strong Heart, "we have here two bags which one of these white men was carrying, and which contain letters and instructions to Long Hair's people and the Great Father at Washington. It would be best to have John Richards read them to us, and for us to

know their contents. If they are unimportant, they ought to be burned, but if of great value, they should be kept by us, to be shown as evidence later. Let the sacks be opened."

The chief grunted his approval, and Richards, taking a sharp knife, cut the mail-bags open, and drew forth several bundles of letters and papers. The papers he laid on one side, then looked at each letter, sorting those addressed to Washington, and placing them in a pile by his side. The other letters he handed one of the young men standing near. Most of them were written by the soldiers to friends in the East, and were of no importance to the Sioux.

Richards selected first those which were addressed to the Secretary of War at Washington. Tearing them open, he spread them out upon his knee, and read aloud to the attentive throng.

The first dispatch gave merely an account of Custer's interview with the Sioux chiefs, stating who were present, and that the tribe was much incensed at the invasion of their reservation by gold-hunters, and that the burning of the agency had been done by the Crows, and not by them.

At the reading of this letter a great grunt went up from the Indians assembled. Richards, without taking any notice of it, proceeded to read one or two unimportant letters regarding supplies and ammunition. When he reached a point in one letter where the following occurred, "Send 2,000 rounds of cartridges, 44 cal., for our Colts revolvers, and 60 more latest improved Colts of that cal.,"

he paused in reading, and addressing the chief, said, "Why would it not be a good plan to burn these letters for ammunition and thus prevent their reaching headquarters? What do you think?"

"A good scheme," said Sitting Bull; "they shall be burned as soon as read. Go on with the white man's talk."

The next letter was written a day later than the first. As Richards read this sentence, "I think it would be a good plan to compel the Sioux to keep within the bounds of their reservations. They should be deprived of all arms," a great shout went up, and much displeasure was manifested. A half dozen chiefs and head warriors attempted to speak at the same time. Both Sitting Bull and Rain-in-the-face sprang to their feet, and after repeated calls for silence, succeeded at last in quieting the assembly. When the tones of a speaker could be heard, Sitting Bull addressed them as follows:

"People of the Sioux nation, you have heard this last letter, and now know by Long Hair's own words how he intends to influence the Great Father against us. You must therefore be ready to move your camp at a moment's notice, and join mine. By combining our forces we shall be able to defeat the designs of these white dogs and carry our plans into effect. These letters and papers must be burned. The facts of the killing of the two men must be kept from Long Hair as long as possible. Should he hear of this and march against us, you must break up your village and fly, without waiting to attack him, until you have joined your forces with those of mine. I will leave

for my camp at the close of this council, and will send a runner in the morning and another in the evening of each day. You must send me runners from your camp in addition to the return of those whom I shall send, each noon and midnight. Thus we shall have ample notification of any move on the part of the whites. I would advise a scouting party of ten well-mounted warriors to follow in the rear of Long Hair's cavalry. They should note very carefully what he does during his move through our country."

When Sitting Bull had finished, Rain-in-the-face arose, and naming ten of his most trusty scouts, sent them out to follow General Custer and report his movements.

The council then adjourned, and early next morning Sitting Bull and his warriors returned to their village, taking as little time as possible on the journey.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DEATH OF MINNEHAHA.

ABOUT eight o'clock that evening, as Wanneta was sitting in the wigwam, embroidering with porcupine quills and beautiful beads a hunting shirt for her husband, her mother entered suddenly in great excitement. Strong Heart, sitting in the corner of the lodge, smoking his pipe and thinking over the events that had taken place during the past few days, did not notice her approach until she was within the lodge.

At the first sight of her he sprang to his feet, and with his usual hospitality, said, "Well, mother, welcome to our home; what news bring you?"

"Oh, my child," she cried dolefully, paying no attention to Strong Heart, "bring your medicine and come quickly. Your little sister, Minnehaha, is very sick. I am afraid that she is going to the land of the great Waukantauka. Something must be done for her at once or her little spirit will have left us and taken its flight to the great hereafter."

Wanneta dropped her work instantly, and seizing her small medicine-chest, ran with her mother to Two Bears' lodge, while Strong Heart followed gravely in the rear.

Upon entering the lodge, a scene presented itself to her eyes that she could never forget. In the corner sat

her brother, John Runner, looking very sad and serious; at the bedside knelt her father, holding his little daughter's hand in his own, and occasionally uttering a low but pitiful exclamation, "O my daughter, my little Bright Eyes!"

Wanneta poured out some of the most powerful medicine she possessed into a small earthen cup. This she handed to Two Bears, who, raising tenderly the head of the delirious child, opened her mouth and poured the draught down her throat. The medicine seemed to do the little one much good, for she looked around upon those about her, and as her mother and sister knelt down by her side, she whispered:

"Are you here, Wanneta?

"Yes, my dear," said Wanneta, "I am here to stay with you. Do not be afraid. I will not leave you."

"I am so hot," murmured the sufferer; "I am as if on fire. Give me some water, mother."

Omaha ran to the spring in the bank, beside the stream, and soon returned with a cup of cool, delicious water for the parched throat and feverish lips of Minnehaha. The child lay upon her bed for some moments, nothing being heard meanwhile save her loud and laboured breathing, and the sobs of both mother and daughter, who realized the hopelessness of her condition.

"Wanneta," gasped the little one, "I am afraid I am not going to get well. I want you to send back to your tipi and get the book which tells about the great Waukantauka, and read me one or two of the stories."

Strong Heart at this sprang out of the entrance and

running swiftly to his wigwam, seized a small New Testament, a gift to Wanneta from one of her teachers. Returning, he handed it to his squaw, who opened the book to several marked passages which had greatly interested the little child in days gone by. Wanneta read of the Saviour's words to little children, and of the white man's hope in the great hereafter. The words were mostly from St. Matthew and St. Luke, and especially that passage in Luke which has been the comfort and stay of weary and heart-sick souls, in many centuries and countless lands:

"Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in nowise enter therein."

"Will the white man's God receive in His house a little Sioux girl?" asked the child.

"Yes, dear," said Wanneta, "the white man's God and great Waukantauka are one and the same great and good spirit. They watch our every action, they forgive the wrongs that we have done, if we are truly sorry. Believe in this great spirit, Minnehaha, and He will not allow the evil Waukausica to harm you."

Here the little sufferer again became delirious, and raved and tossed upon her couch. She cried out in her fright and terror, and imagined that the horrible night when the wicked Wa-da-ha pronounced his terrible curse upon her was still passing. She thought that he had her in his power, and that he was laughing in scorn over her condition. She cried out in her anguish for her father

and mother to save her, and she would have risen from her bed of skins, and leaped out in the darkness beyond, in the vain endeavour to escape from the torments of her own mind, had not her father withheld her, and prevented exposure that would have resulted in certain death.

Poor Omaha and Wanneta found little consolation from their sorrow in the great tears that coursed down their cheeks. Even the stern father and his son, and the inflexible Strong Heart, felt the water springing to their eyes, in spite of their efforts to control their feelings, and they too wept.

Strong Heart ran to the spring and got another cup of water, in which was placed one of the strong powders from Wanneta's chest. This was given to the child, in the hope of alleviating her suffering. The draught partially restored her, and by the dim light of the fire she recognized her friends once more.

She stretched out her hand feebly toward the loved ones, and beckoned to them to come close to her side.

They crowded around to listen to the last few words she might have to utter, for all saw that there was now no hope of saving her.

"I am going, mother," she whispered, "to the great Waukantauka, and you must not cry or weep when I am gone. I believe what the good book says, and know that there will be room for a little Indian girl in the great house of the good spirit. I am not afraid to die now. Good-bye all, I——" and the child tried to speak again. But the words refused to come, she gasped once or twice, her hands twitched convulsively, and then her spirit sped

away on its long, long journey to the house of Waukantauka.

The women cried aloud, and even the father joined his sobs with theirs, as he thought of the little girl, now gone from them forever, whose bright and winsome ways had found a place in the heart of nearly every one in the entire tribe.

Her prattling voice was silent, her dainty feet would no more enter noiselessly her father's lodge. Her merry, silvery laugh would no more ring in all its joyfulness among her playmates. Only a week ago, she had plaited out of wild-grasses, which she had gathered upon the prairie with her own hands, a small mat for her father to lay his pipe upon. In the early stages of her sickness, she was trying to make another for her brother, John Runner. The half-finished work, now held by the stolid John in his hands, seemed to call forth heart-aches, and he, too, who had often laughed at tears, mingled his sorrow with the others. Again and again, he pressed the piece of her handiwork to his breast, and in after days he wore inside his hunting-shirt, next to his breast, this token.

Strong Heart offered what few words of condolence he could, and then returned to his father's lodge, to inform them of the sad news. The chief himself, and his squaw, Wawa, came gravely to the afflicted tipi, to offer words of sympathy. Wawa and Chief Gopher's wife mingled their tears with those of Omaha. No more sympathy, no more love could have been shown, than was displayed by these rude folk of the prairie at the sorrow of their friends.

The daughter of the savage had found consolation and hope in the same holy book which has been the comfort of the great and good in civilized communities.

The body of Minnehaha was carefully wrapped in her best dress; her hair was plaited and arranged by her mother's tender hands, and her feet were encased in new moccasins, the last loving gift from Wanneta. Thus arrayed, the child was borne to her resting-place. At the suggestion of Wanneta and Strong Heart, a procession was formed somewhat after the manner of our funerals. A little stretcher was made of poles, which was covered with soft skins. On this was placed the body of the girl, with a blanket as a covering. The pall was borne by six of the child's playmates. Following immediately after was the bereaved family, while many sympathetic friends brought up the rear.

The procession moved very slowly and solemnly down the banks of the stream. There was no sound save the cries of the mourners; no dirge save the sighing of the wind in the tops of the lofty cottonwoods.

Right in the centre of the cemetery a small scaffold had been erected. When those who bore the body had reached the side of this, the young men carefully raised the body of the child upon it and wrapped it in all the robes which the friends had presented. There Minnehaha was left until nature should have done her work.

After these last sad rites were performed, the friends returned to the camp. Wanneta and Omaha alone remained to weep and wail near the body of the loved one to bemoan her untimely death, and to pray to the great

Waukantauka to receive her unto himself and give her rest in his almighty love.

After they had wept and mourned for many hours they returned to their tipis, to take up with heavy hearts their daily tasks. It was many days before the smile returned to Wanneta's cheeks, and it was long months before poor Omaha seemed herself again.

CHAPTER XVII.

GENERAL CUSTER HEARS OF THE TRAGEDY.

SOON after the killing of the two white men, perhaps not more than two hours later, a squaw man left the Sioux camp, ostensibly to go hunting, but in reality to inform Custer of what had happened. The squaw men in the Sioux nation were a constant source of trouble, and, until driven out by the Indians, caused many murders and were guilty of many acts of crime. They were base enough to sell or betray their best friend to the highest bidder. Such a man was Fletcher, a Frenchman by birth, who had joined the Sioux and married an Indian woman in order that he might live off the tribe. He was a large, well-built man, had an impediment in his speech, and was the possessor of a fine head of very curly hair.

He reached General Custer's army without seeing any Indians two days after he had left the camp. He rode directly to the front, and, saluting the general, asked for an interview.

His request having been granted, forthwith the following conversation took place:

"General, your mail-carrier and another man were attempting to pass our village, when two of our Indians galloped out and without provocation shot both of them.

The mail was taken into the council-house, broken open, and a squaw man translated to the Indians the contents of your dispatches."

"Who committed this murder?" asked Custer.

Then, turning to an orderly, he instructed him to summon all his officers to the front.

"The first chief under Sitting Bull, Rain-in-the-face, had this done," replied the liar Fletcher. Custer questioned the man further, and having no reason to doubt his story, consulted his officers as to what had better be done. They differed in their ideas as to the best course of action, and Custer, having the matter entirely in his own hands, decided to cut short his march to the north, turn about and move directly back to the Sioux camp. Here he would build a small fort and leave a garrison to control their village. Then he would move the remainder of his force to the agency, and when the first opportunity presented he would by some means get Rain-in-the-face and a few of the braves to visit the store and take him prisoner. He asked Fletcher what he thought of the plan. Fletcher said it would do very well, provided everything was kept extremely quiet, for Rain-in-the-face was a very sharp Indian, and could see as far as any one. As Fletcher expressed it in the forcible language of the West, "It don't take no brick house to fall on him before he tumbles to the little racket."

This plan having been decided upon, Custer called a halt. He then gave orders for the command to wheel, and, making a wide detour around the Sioux camp, to march for the agency. Thence, after leaving two hun-

dred of his soldiers and one of the Gatling guns, the rest were to move forward to protect the miners to the south.

The troops moved as rapidly as possible until dark, when they bivouacked upon the prairie. At daylight they were up and in the saddle, and continued their march as fast as the heavy horses could get over the ground. About ten o'clock on the third night, they galloped up to the agency, aroused the agent, advised him of their intentions, and then encamped. The next morning Custer and one hundred of his men marched down the stream, crossed where they would not be seen by the Indians, and set out for the miners' town below. Once there, he established headquarters and gave the town the name of Deadwood, famous in frontier history during the next few years. General Custer's brother was left at the agency, and to him was entrusted the execution of the plan to capture Rain-in-the-face. Lieutenant Custer possessed a great deal of ability, both as a soldier and as a frontier detective, if I may use the term, as we shall see by the way he succeeded in taking Chief Rain-in-the-face.

He placed the soldiers back of the agency several hundred yards. He had them encamped on as small a space as possible, and in a slight hollow, so that Indians might come to the agency and not see that an enemy was secreted near, unless they should pass around the house or mount some of the ridges toward the north. About noon the next day, when the camp site had been laid out, Custer entered the government buildings, and summon-

ing the agent to an interview, was closeted with him in one of the small unfinished rooms on the second floor.

"There is no use in talking," said Custer, "we have got to catch this man, and keep him from killing any more whites. Sitting Bull has a devil of a temper himself when once roused, but he is nowhere when compared with this fellow. I hear, too, that Rain-in-the-face has a young son, a mighty nice sort of fellow, brave as a lion, who is married to one of the prettiest girls in the whole Sioux nation."

"That is so," said the agent; "his son is called Strong Heart, and is one of the bravest men I ever saw;" and he related the story of the burning building.

"He was once attacked in the Bad Lands by thirty Crows, and this girl was with him. They had a very romantic time of it, indeed. The girl stood by him and helped him throughout. The Crows charged the cave he was in twice, and he killed twenty-three or four of them. The Sioux that went up to rescue them said they never saw such shooting. The young fellow was shot through the shoulder and hurt badly enough to kill an ordinary man, but he fought like a tiger, and did not seem to mind the wound in the least. The girl staunched the flow of the blood, and cared for him until his friends came. He is thought more of than any other young man in the Sioux nation, has a good character, and I never knew him to do anything out of the way. If there is to be a war, I would rather get him on our side than any man in the Sioux nation, but if he is our enemy he will never be taken alive."

"Well," said Custer, "he must be the deuce of a fellow. I should like to see him."

"In appearance," said the agent, "he is a very fine specimen of humanity. He is tall, broad-shouldered, and straight as an arrow. He weighs about two hundred pounds. I think, with knife or tomahawk in hand, he would be equal to half a dozen ordinary Indians."

"Now, to change the subject somewhat," said Custer, "how would it do for that young man to come up here and have a pow-wow with us?"

"It would not do," said the agent, "for he would learn that you knew of the murder of your men, and would warn his father. He is as sharp as the devil. He is nobody's fool, and he will tell you to your face what he thinks of you. You had better leave him alone, and deal with the old man."

Custer thought a moment, then an idea struck him. "Suppose you send word by an employee to Rain-in-the-face, that you are writing a letter to the Great Father at Washington, and wish to know what he has to say about rations. Tell him you are going to ask for more rations for the people here. Tell him that you want more meat and flour for his people, and that if he will come up and let you know how many rations he requires, you will specify in your letter accordingly. Tell him also that we will keep it a secret from the nation until the first shipment comes. That is, have a little sort of surprise arranged for them, you know."

"Tiptop," said the agent, slapping his companion on the back and offering another fragrant weed, which, had

he not been an Indian agent, he could not have afforded in this far-off portion of the country.

Having lighted their cigars, they resumed the conversation, and it was not long before all the details of the plan were arranged. All this time Rain-in-the-face was lounging idly in his wigwam. Suddenly there dashed up to the door of the tipi one of the ten scouts sent to watch Custer's movements, with the intelligence that Custer and two hundred of his men had gone south to the miners' camp, while they did not know what had become of the rest of his force. At this the chief was somewhat surprised, and, calling for John Runner, sent him post-haste with the intelligence to Sitting Bull.

He could not imagine why Custer should tell him that he intended to go north and to the railroad, and should then turn back immediately to the miners' camp below. He suspected some treachery, and, feeling that there was something which he could not understand, he sent for Gopher and one or two of the head warriors to learn what they would say regarding this new move on the part of Long Hair.

The next day one of the agent's employees came to the camp, and, walking direct to Rain-in-the-face's lodge, called him out.

"Chief," said he, "the agent is about to write a letter to the Great Father. In this he is going to say that your people should have rations every two weeks through the summer as well as in the winter. He wants to know just what you would most desire, and asks that you and one or two warriors come immediately to the agency and

hold a pow-wow with him. He wants to keep it a secret from the tribe, so as to surprise them when the rations come. Can you not come at once?"

"Certainly," replied the chief, "I shall be glad to come. There is much our people need, and if the agent is going to write the Great Father, I shall be most happy to tell him what he had better ask for, and give him an idea as to the quantity of each article that we need."

Rain-in-the-face mounted his pony and calling out to Wawa that he was going to the agency, started out with the employee at a brisk trot. It did not take them long to traverse the five miles, and they were soon in front of the buildings.

Dismounting, Rain-in-the-face drove a peg into the ground in a spot where there was considerable grass and tied his pony so that the animal could graze. He then entered the store and took a seat upon an empty nail keg.

Up to the present time there had been no indication of any intention to capture him, nothing to make him feel in the least suspicious. Several of his young men, who had seen him start, leaped upon their ponies and followed him to the buildings, wondering what was to take place. None of them came armed save one, who had a hunting-knife stuck in his belt.

"How," said the chief, as the agent entered, and, rising, grasped the white man's hand; then to the attendant, who acted as interpreter, he said, "You sent for me to talk about provisions for my people. We are much in need of many things which the Great Father has, and

shall be glad to receive the good gifts which he has prepared for us."

As the interpreter translated each sentence, Custer, who was in the back room with several soldiers, said to himself: "Hear the old rascal talk. One would think he was a saint instead of a bloodthirsty, red-handed murderer."

"Yes," replied the agent, wishing to keep up the deception a few minutes longer. "I was thinking about writing a letter to the Great Father to ask him to give you many things which you doubtless need. Now tell me what you need most."

The chief cleared his throat, and, nodding toward the interpreter, said: "More flour, more meal, a keg every two weeks for ten persons, more live beef, and some blankets——"

At this moment, the young men who had been without the door entered, and each said "How" to the agent. They were about to be seated, when Custer and a dozen cavalrymen, with sabres and pistols, entered the room, fearing, from the presence of more Indians, that the Sioux were coming in large numbers to hear the interview.

Rain-in-the-face, seeing them enter, and judging from their appearance that something was not right, called to the agent, "What is the matter? What do these men here armed?" and as he spoke he arose to his feet and started for the front entrance. His young men advanced also, and stood ready to protect their chief.

"Stand, Rain-in-the-face! You are our prisoner," cried Custer. "You killed the mail-carrier and the doctor

sent from our command. If you move, the soldiers will fire."

At this the young Indians made a threatening movement, but they were unarmed, and, upon the cavalrymen cocking their revolvers, they stood in silence, while Rain-in-the-face was seized roughly, his hands being bound behind him. The soldiers hurried him into a room and there locked him up, placing a guard over the door. In order to awe his attendants and prevent an attempt at rescue, Custer had had the cavalry assemble in the rear of the building, and, as the capture was made, they dashed out in front in full force, with the bugles sounding. Custer addressed the young men through the interpreter, told them that the United States government would not permit the murder of her citizens, that their chief would probably be hung, and that they had better not attempt rescue. All this was done so quickly that the Indians scarcely knew what to do; so without replying they ran out of the building, leaped upon their ponies, and dashed back to the village with the news of the capture of their chief.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE PLAN OF WANNETA AND STRONG HEART.

THE soldiers who hurried the chief into the little room up-stairs left two of their number to act as guard at the door of the apartment. Rain-in-the-face paced restlessly back and forth, looking about him, and taking in, in a few rapid glances, the walls and ceiling of his prison. There was but one small window in the room, and that opened on the low roof of the warehouse. It was in an unfinished condition, but had been boarded up, at the orders of young Custer, in anticipation of his capture.

He knew well that the young men who were with him in the store at the time of his seizure would carry the news of his imprisonment to the camp. He knew that they would alarm the village, and that it would be but a few moments before all should learn of his misfortune. These thoughts were some consolation to him; and we will leave him for the present in his prison, pacing restlessly to and fro, muttering to himself, and impatiently awaiting the coming of his people to release him.

The Indians, having passed the soldiers, galloped back to the camp, as we have said, with the direful intelligence. As they approached they set up a series of yells. Hearing these, every man, woman, and child, with a common impulse, rushed out from the tipis and crowded around the horsemen.

"Hear ye," cried out one of the young men. "Chief Rain-in-the-face has been captured, and is held in a small room at the agency. Custer's brother has done this. To the council-house, every one, and hear the particulars there."

As the speaker finished they all sprang from their ponies, and, throwing the lariats to the squaws, rushed toward the great central square, followed by an excited crowd.

Chief Gopher was not long in making his appearance, and, together with Strong Heart, acted as central figure in this important meeting. The Indians did not seem to realize at first what a great disaster had fallen upon them, and it was not until the young men had made long speeches that they took in the situation.

"Order! order!" cried Chief Gopher. "Be still and hear what these young men have to say." At this the tumult subsided somewhat, and as every one listened with breathless attention, a young man rose to his feet, and gravely addressed the assembled multitude.

"My people: We went with our chief to the agency to send word to the Great Father that we needed more rations and clothes. The great chief had barely commenced his speech to the agent when an officer, brother of Long Hair, entered with five soldiers, and, seizing him, drove him hastily up-stairs and fastened him in a room. We were not armed and we could do nothing. To frighten us the officer ordered all the cavalry out in front of the agency, and they paraded back and forth during the capture, with a great flourish of arms and

blowing of trumpets. We asked why this was done, and were told that our chief had murdered the mail-carrier and the horse-doctor, whom you all know were killed by one of our young men in self-defense. The killing was justifiable, and was not murder, as the agent said. As soon as we saw that it was impossible, and foolhardy likewise, to attempt rescue, we returned to the camp with the news. Revenge this insult, my people, and drive these soldiers back to the Great Father, first making them give up Chief Rain-in-the-face. I have done."

Before the assembled Sioux could comment upon this speech, Strong Heart sprang to his feet, and, with all the fury of an angry warrior, addressed the multitude, and called upon them to take up arms against these villains and release their noble chief.

"Brothers," he exclaimed, "you have heard what has been said, and it now remains for you to prove whether you have brave hearts and are men, or whether you are weak and faint, and will submit to injury. Come with me at once; let us attack the agency, secure our chief, and teach these Long Knives what the Sioux can do. Do not delay—come! Great Waukantauka will aid you, for our cause is right. Behold, I sound my war-cry:

"The eagles scream on high,
They whet their forked beaks,
Raise, raise, the battle-cry,
'Tis fame our leader seeks."

This last fiery speech called forth a wild burst of enthusiasm from the assembled throng. The braves

sounded their war-whoop, and the walls of the council-house were shaken by the thunders of noise which vibrated and re-vibrated from ceiling to floor. The din became so terrific that nothing could be heard save one continuous roar, and the chiefs were powerless to preserve order. Some one had brought a rifle to the council, and Chief Gopher, seizing this, discharged it into the roof above a number of times. The report attracted the attention of all, and for the time being order was restored.

"Young men," cried Gopher, "you have heard the excellent words of Strong Heart. Let us send to the camp above and bring down their warriors to aid us in the attack. There are too many soldiers for us to assault them safely, and we must therefore delay until we have received aid from Sitting Bull. His warriors are so brave, that it will be necessary for us to make a few charges only before all of the soldiers shall flee, and leave us in possession of our chief and of the field. Think of this, young men, and wait until word has been sent to Sitting Bull."

At the conclusion of this speech Strong Heart sprang to his feet, and addressing the assembled multitude, cried out in his loud, clear, and ringing tones, "O brothers, the words of Gopher are good words, and well spoken. You must listen to them." Then, turning to John Runner, he said, "Swift messenger, fly as if your life was at stake to Sitting Bull's camp, and advise him to bring all the warriors he can gather to help us. Go at once."

John Runner made his way through the crowd, reached

the corral, mounted his fleetest pony, and rode that eighty miles between the two reservations faster than it was ever ridden before. He was less than eight hours in making the trip, and although his horse fell dead as he rode into camp, he bore the news without delay to the council-house of the other camp. They furnished him another horse, and he returned in about nine hours to the point from which he started.

As soon as the news reached Sitting Bull a scene of excitement followed which almost rivalled the one I have just described. John Runner was not far on his return trip when there filed out of the upper village nearly eight hundred armed warriors. They were clad in all their gorgeous blankets and feathers. They rode bareback, and each carried in a food-sack three days' provisions. They were armed to the teeth, ready for a most desperate conflict, and woe betide any small parties of whites who should fall into their clutches.

At the lower reservation the tumult and uproar, as soon as John Runner had gone, broke forth again in uncontrollable fury, and the very earth itself was made to tremble with their terrific shouts.

Seeing that nothing could be done, the chief adjourned the council, and announced that a grand war-dance would take place that night. As the men poured out of the building into the open air, they let out their pent-up feelings after the manner of their race. They mingled in the throng of women and children, and at a signal given by Strong Heart the whole host of two thousand souls let out a yell in unison. It was so loud as to be heard dis-

tinctly at the agency, five miles away. It notified the soldiers of the feelings of these people, and illustrated to young Custer, more forcibly than could any speech of great length, what desperate men he had to deal with, and what he could expect were his troops defeated and he himself captured.

The chief in his dismal quarters heard the sound also, and, becoming excited, threw back his broad shoulders, opened his great mouth, and let out in response a mighty war-whoop. It was, of course, heard by those in and about the building only, and whatever satisfaction it may have been to him, it served but to anger his captors, who pounded upon the door and cautioned him to make no more such disturbances.

That night at the village the fires were lighted in the central square, and a great war-dance was held. At this the Indians were painted in hideous colours, as they were on the night of the burning of the medicine-man. Before entering into a description of this dance, let us glance into Wanneta's home and see what she was doing when the news of the capture of her father-in-law reached her.

She heard the shouts of the horsemen as they dashed into camp, and, like all the other Indian women, ran out to ascertain the cause of the disturbance, and was not long in finding out what had happened. Her husband was with her at the time, and he rushed off to the council as soon as he heard the news, leaving her alone in the crowd. She, too, hurried to the council, but on account of the great press was unable to get within the enclosure, and therefore heard little of what was said. As soon as

the meeting was over she ran back to her home, and was speedily joined by Strong Heart, who told her all that had taken place.

Poor Wanneta was in a quandary as to what to advise her husband. She knew that it would be impossible to stay the flood of public wrath against the whites. Should she, therefore, do what little she could to check the coming war, or should she permit him to take up arms against the brothers of those who had so kindly taught her? She knew not what to do, and in her anguish of mind at last broke forth in the exclamation, "Oh, Strong Heart, cannot this trouble be avoided, cannot something be done to appease the anger of the Sioux?"

"My dear," replied Strong Heart, "I do not see what can be done, as your own father-in-law has been captured and maltreated by these dogs. Think, my dear one, what disgrace has been put upon our family. My own father has been arrested and put into a miserable prison for a crime which he never committed! Do you mean to say that we ought to submit to this?"

"Strong Heart," replied Wanneta, "let us avoid the war if we can." Her love for the whites was fast giving away, and its place in her heart was being rapidly filled with anger at the treatment her own people had received at the hands of those whom she had been taught to respect and reverence.

She looked up to the face of her husband for a moment, and, breaking down the last barrier with an angry gesture and flashing eyes, cried out, "No, I will stand by my people, the Sioux, to the end; whatever they do, will be

right to me. I am a Sioux girl, and I now hate the whites."

Strong Heart's face, which had up to this time been filled with anxiety and mistrust, assumed a look of happiness; and, forgetting for the moment all the wrongs of his people, all the wild scenes through which he had just passed, he caught Wanneta in his arms, gave her a tender kiss, and with an exclamation equivalent in our language to "God bless you," rushed from the tipi.

About dark that evening, he returned for his supper, and after having eaten a small quantity of stewed buffalo meat, and some meal cakes, which Wanneta had baked in the hot ashes until they were crisp and brown, returned to Chief Gopher's lodge, where he held a short pow-wow with a number of braves.

An hour later, he returned to his home, and thence, accompanied by Wanneta, attended the dance held around the council-house. Strong Heart did not take part in this dance until late that night. He stood for the greater part of the evening near his wife, watching the dancers as each in turn passed the spot where he was standing. It was an unusually clear night, and rather cool, just the kind of weather for a war-dance.

There was very little singing in this dance, and the orchestra was not as large as in the other dances we have described, for there were four squaws only engaged in doleful singing and tom-tom beating. Two young men made discordant notes upon two rude reed flutes. Thus the combination formed by the flutes, the voices, and the drums, could scarcely be classed as melodious.

Most of the dancers brandished guns and revolvers, and not a few of them carried scalps of their enemies, the Crows, upon short sticks. They waved the scalps back and forth during the dance, and frequently held them up to the view of the audience, at the same time making with a knife an imaginary circle around an imaginary head, thus indicating how they would treat the soldiers whom they should capture in fight.

As the husband and wife stood looking upon the dance, a revulsion of feeling came over Wanneta, and she could not help thinking of the many friends she had made while in the East, and of their disappointment if they could see her giving her consent to an attack upon the whites.

She thought of the motherly face of one kind woman who had been her instructor, and who also led each morning the chapel exercises of the school. That woman had always cautioned the Indian girl not to give consent, or to encourage deeds of violence. Wanneta could imagine how pained and shocked this kind woman would be, to see her looking upon such a barbaric scene.

As they watched, the warriors in the dance cast off the little frock of beaded deer-skin, and continued their leaping about the fires, with nothing on their bodies save the scanty breech-clout. The faces of the Indians were strained and distorted, as in their evolutions they killed in imagination an enemy, or captured a foe. They let out yell after yell in savage fury. The dance went on hour after hour, until the young girl grew sick of its

monotony, tired of looking upon the wild scenes, and begged Strong Heart to return to the tipi.

The young man turned back with her. An idea had come to them which he was thinking of putting into execution, a desperate scheme for the release of his father. When they turned to leave the crowd he called out to the medicine-man to follow them. He obeyed the summons of Strong Heart, and throwing down his medicine-sack, followed the husband and wife to their wigwam, and entering after them, took a seat quietly in the corner. No one would have imagined that this subdued personage was he who had been foremost in the wild dance; there was not the slightest intimation in his demeanour of the scenes in which he had just taken part.

Strong Heart seated himself in the centre of the tipi, and drawing forth two red stone pipes, offered one to the medicine-man and lighted the other himself. After they had drawn a few whiffs, he opened the conversation as follows:

"I want to get my father out of prison, and I would like to have your co-operation. Wanneta and I have made a plan. We want you to give good luck to the enterprise with your powerful medicine, knowing that, aided by this, our efforts will be successful."

The medicine-man remained a moment in silence, and then looking up, said:

"I will do anything in my power to aid great Rain-in-the-face to escape, and any scheme which you may propose will find a ready seconder in myself, my medicine is good, and will give aid to the enterprise."

Wanneta, who had remained silent, now spoke:

"Tell him all about it, husband, and make him promise secrecy. No one in the village must know of this until after we have started to carry it out. Then they shall know all."

"Well," said Strong Heart, settling himself back for a long speech, and blowing meanwhile great clouds of smoke toward the dome of the tipi, "the plan that we have arranged is subject to change. You shall hear it, and shall then tell me what you think of it.

"They have built a little way below the agency a small, rough guard-house, in which they have confined the chief. One of my young men who went hunting this morning, and who returned in the afternoon, reported that the carpenters were busily engaged in constructing a light frame building about ten feet high and twelve feet square. I sent another runner there just at dark, and he said that the building was finished, and the soldiers were bringing Rain-in-the-face toward it. He waited until he saw them open the door and put the chief inside, and then returned to me with the intelligence. I do not know whether a guard will be stationed at the door all the time or not. In case there is, we shall have to shoot him. It is most likely that Custer would not trust a captive in so insecure a prison without a strong watch placed at the door constantly. This can be ascertained later.

"The best scheme to put into effect is, it seems to me, for you and me to go well armed on a dark night to the spot and reconnoitre. If the guard is there we will shoot him instantly, then either pry off one of the boards, or cut

a hole with an axe large enough to let the chief through. The building is faced with inch-plank, therefore to cut one of these through would take a powerful man but a few seconds, and as you know I chop fairly well, I think I could get the old man out before the guards could arrive. If necessary, we could take fifty braves along to cover our retreat, and if the soldiers should rush out at the report of the rifle when the guard was shot, these braves could hold them in check until we were safely away with Rain-in-the-face.

"On the other hand, if there is no guard left, or the pickets make only occasional visits to the prison, I can pry open the door with a strong stick, unless it be securely fastened. In that case a plank can be detached from the rear of the building.

"Suppose we attempt this rescue to-morrow night, if it is dark and cloudy. What say you?"

"The plan is a good one," replied the medicine-man. "I will say nothing about it to any one, and will tell only my father, Gopher, when we start, so that he can order the village to break up and be ready to move instantly upon our return. Should we escape safely with the chief, the soldiers will be after us in a few hours. Therefore, the whole village should be ready to march northward and join Sitting Bull. They can take down the lodges of those who go with us on this desperate undertaking, so that there need be no delay on the part of any one. Two or three hundred braves must be left as a rear guard to protect the tribe in its flight."

The plan having thus been arranged, the two young

men sat in silence for some time. Wanneta, who had listened to every word, and had thought of one or two important points, made a suggestion.

"Why would it not be best for me to first obtain consent from Custer to see him, and visit the chief in his prison? I could post him as to the details of the rescue, so that he would expect us and be prepared when the hour comes. I can approach Long Hair's brother and pretend to be the chief's squaw, and in this way gain entrance to his prison. If he refuse I can cry, and by working upon his sympathies carry my point. If you think well of this, I will go to-morrow and spend the entire afternoon with the chief."

"It is a good plan," said Strong Heart, "but I fear it will be hard to carry into effect. However, I have no objections, Wanneta, so you may make the attempt to-morrow afternoon. Be sure and tell the chief everything if you gain entrance. Say to him that his people are ready to stand by him unto the end, and that his own son, Strong Heart, will be the first to grasp his hand when he has been released from his confinement."

The two men remained in the wigwam, smoking and talking, for a while longer. Then Strong Heart left Wanneta and returned to the war-dance, taking part until toward morning, when he again wended his way to his home, flung himself down upon his bed of bear-skins and slept till noon.

CHAPTER XIX.

WANNETA VISITS RAIN-IN-THE-FACE.

SCARCELY had the noon meal been finished that day, when a young Indian woman, riding a spirited pony, was seen by the men around the agency to gallop up to the very front of the store, dismount, tie the animal to a ring in a post, and enter the building.

She was well dressed and seemed bent upon some important mission. The agent, who had not seen her for over three years, did not recognize her, and therefore suspected nothing. He stood behind the counter, conversing with young Custer.

Approaching him, she asked in very good English:

"Where can I find the brother of General Custer? I want to see him."

"Right here," replied the agent. "He is standing by me." At this Custer looked up, and saw before him one of the prettiest girls he had ever beheld. He noticed her black and piercing eyes, her long dark wavy hair, and her strong but frank face. Taking in these points, as well as her shapely figure, at a glance, he put on one of his best smiles and said:

"Young woman, what do you wish?"

"You have, sir, my husband, Chief Rain-in-the-face, confined in a little building near here. I ask permission

to talk with him this afternoon. I come of my own accord to see him, and trust that you will not refuse me. His people are very sorry at his capture, and will do all in their power to have him released. Two of our young men would even offer themselves in the chief's stead, as hostages, if they would be accepted."

"Well," replied Custer, "it is against the rules to allow any one to see an Indian prisoner. There have been many escapes and rescues through the thoughtlessness of officers in allowing some of the friends of a prisoner to visit him in his confinement. If I were certain that you would not use this interview for any other purpose than that of condolence, I would grant your request, but I am afraid I shall have to refuse you."

At this the young woman put on a most pitiful and woe-begone expression, and, looking up into his face with her eyes full of tears, said:

"Do I look like one who would deceive you?"

"Well," replied Custer, "I must admit that you do look like an uncommonly innocent Sioux girl, but it would not be right for me to break the rules of the regiment.

"By the way, have you not been to an Eastern school? You do not look like the other Indian women. You must be educated."

"I have been educated, but am a Sioux woman for all that," replied the girl. "I have come here to ask, yes, to beg, to spend a few hours with my husband. I have in mind his lonely condition, and know what my words of comfort will do for him, and how they will cheer him.

If your dear friend were shut up on a false charge, would you not try to see him? Yes, I know you would consider the man very heartless who should refuse to let you see the loved one. Is it possible that this is the gallant Custer of whom I have heard so much, whose deeds of valour have been related at our firesides through the long winter evenings? Is this the man who is so brave, and yet who refuses to let a wife see her husband? Perhaps I had better go back to my people and tell them what you have told me. Our young men are quiet, and do not take this capture to heart as much as you imagine they do. But it will need just about a dozen strong words from the wife of the principal chief to bring a thousand howling savages about your buildings here. They will carry death and destruction among your men and release their chief.

"I do not say this as a vain boast. Probably there will be no attack at all. I wish to tell you what is possible only. I came here simply to ask to see my husband; you have refused me, and there is nothing but for me to return." The young woman, whose eyes had flashed, and whose bosom had heaved during this outburst, turned toward the door, and, with sorrowful countenance and heavy footsteps, was about to leave.

The agent, who had remained by Custer's side all this time, said:

"Tom, let her see him. She isn't going to do any harm. Don't send her back to her people in a rage."

"Young woman," called out Custer, "I have decided to grant you this interview, and will take you myself to

the prison where your chief is confined. I trust to your honour that it will be turned to no bad purpose. Come, follow me."

He reached up as he left the counter and took down the key to the prison; then stepping out of the door, walked by the side of Wanneta to the building.

Two orderlies followed a short distance behind to see that nothing out of the way happened.

There was not the slightest evidence in the young woman's countenance of the secret joy which filled her heart, and no one could have told that she was not suffering the greatest sorrow at the condition of her chief.

Reaching the building, Custer unlocked the heavy door, allowed her to enter quickly, then swung it shut, locked it, and returned to the building, where he spent the afternoon in speculating upon the interview, and in wondering what was the history of the beautiful girl whom he had met.

When Wanneta entered, Rain-in-the-face, who had been lying upon a miserable buffalo robe in the corner, sprang to his feet and rushed forward with a smile upon his broad face, and in subdued tones—for he did not know who might be listening—called out:

"Oh, my child, how glad I am to see you; I had thought my people had forgotten me."

They walked over to the corner and sat down on the robe, listened for a few moments to hear if any soldiers were about; then, hearing no noise, Wanneta said:

"Oh, Chief, I had great trouble in getting this interview, but at last Long Hair's brother let me in; so here

I am. I have much to tell you, and if you will listen I will begin at the beginning. Yesterday afternoon the tribe held a council, and sent runners to Sitting Bull's camp to inform him of your capture, asking his young men to come to our aid. Last night they held a great war-dance."

At this the chief interrupted, became furious, and uttered some terrible threats against the whites who had, in spite of his great dignity as chief, imprisoned him like a common soldier.

After the old man had calmed down, Wanneta continued:

"We held a long talk last night, and we determined to attempt to release you to-night. The medicine-man and Strong Heart will come here about ten o'clock. If the night is quite light they will not come, but if dark, you can expect them. Fifty braves will follow at a distance to rush in and save you in case the soldiers charge upon the building. We hope to get you out without alarming them; but may make some noise. I see that the door is too heavy to be broken. We will therefore remove one of the planks at the back.

"The village will be ready to move at once in case we get you safely out. We shall have a horse in waiting for you, and all of us will gallop back to the camp on the wings of the wind. The village will be taken down, and will move northward to join Sitting Bull. Runners will be sent to notify Sitting Bull's warriors to turn back, as they will not be needed here, since we shall join them soon. These runners were dispatched this morning, and are doubtless well on their way to the camp by this time.

It is scarcely possible that the plan can fail, as no one knows of it. What do you think, Chief?"

Rain-in-the-face, who had become more and more excited as the young woman went on, now burst out with an expression of great glee, and would doubtless have let out a war-whoop, had not his fair companion placed her hand upon his arm and cautioned him to be silent, lest he should alarm the soldiers waiting near by, and thus notify them that something unusual was taking place. So he remained silent for a little while, and spoke in an undertone as follows:

"If I get out of this prison safely I will be a most bitter enemy of this Long Hair's brother, and some day I shall hope to meet him in battle and be revenged for all my insults."

"What will you do?" asked Wanneta.

Then the old man pronounced a most frightful curse, and said:

"I will have the young man's blood, and will cut his heart out."

This most horrible threat he carried into effect when, nearly a year afterward, he searched the bloody battlefield of the Little Big Horn for the body of Lieutenant Tom Custer.

After the details of the escape had been arranged, Wanneta talked with him for some time on various matters, and at last, knowing that she had a good opportunity, broached a subject to which she had given much thought. Although she knew that the chief would scarcely regard it favourably, yet she hoped he would

remember what she should say, and in this way she might save some bloodshed and avert many crimes.

"Chief Rain-in-the-face, suppose the Great Father at Washington should withdraw his troops, and not molest the Sioux further, would you be willing to call your men off the war-path, and settle down and live as we used?"

"That depends upon several things. I must have revenge for this insult; then I will consider the matter. The invasion by the gold-hunters of the Black Hills, and the march of Custer through our reservation, tell me plainly that there will be trouble between the Long Knives and ourselves. It is impossible to avoid a conflict now, and it seems to me that there is no hope of securing peace, unless the Great Father shall consent to many things which we ask him."

Wanneta sat in silence for some time, and then realizing that it was useless to say more, approached the door, and looking out through a small crevice, saw some soldiers at a short distance. She called out to them, and one walked forward. He had evidently been placed on duty there, for at her words he produced the key, unlocked the door, bade her step out quickly, and then shut it again.

Without noticing the men, who stared hard at her, she mounted the pony and galloped across the plain toward the camp. As her noble Brown Eyes bore her swiftly homeward with easy motion, she could not help thinking how she had outwitted young Custer, and laughed loudly as she remembered the pitiful expression with which she begged the interview.

Having reached the tipi, she found John Runner in conversation with her husband. She said to him, "John, go tell Chief Gopher to come here at once."

While John was gone, she told Strong Heart of the interview with Tom Custer, and both enjoyed a hearty laugh over the sharp trick played upon the young man.

When Gopher entered the lodge, he was told of what had taken place, and was asked to bid the people prepare the village for instant flight. The young men who had been sent to tell Sitting Bull of the plan of rescue had met him and his command about twenty miles away. Upon hearing the scheme, the chief had turned about and marched back to his own camp, where he put all in readiness to receive the other village, which was to join him some time during the next day.

Everything having been thus arranged, nothing was left but for the three conspirators to wait until darkness and a late hour should insure their carrying out their scheme safely.

Tom Custer turned in about ten o'clock that night. As he fell asleep the three rescuers were on their way to release the chief. He did not dream that the interview which he had granted the sorrowing maiden was to be a help to his prisoner's escape. However, his slumbers were soon rudely broken, for shortly after eleven o'clock an orderly pounded hard upon his door and called out the startling news:

"The Indians have released Rain-in-the-face. Rise at once; there is trouble brewing."

CHAPTER XX.

THE RESCUE OF RAIN-IN-THE-FACE.

A GROUP of three figures, with hoods drawn over their heads so that they could not be recognized, left the tipi of Strong Heart about ten o'clock that night, and, mounting their ponies, rode quietly across the plain in the direction of the agency.

They were all well armed, Strong Heart himself having his Winchester, bowie-knife, and revolver. The medicine-man carried a rifle and a knife also, but no pistol. Wanneta had a small revolver, but no other weapon. In one hand she held firmly a small sack in which was a file, cold chisel, and hammer, with which they expected to force an entrance to the door of the prison.

They rode across the plain for nearly one hour, until the buildings could be seen looming up in the darkness. The night was cloudy, although not very dark, for the moon came out occasionally from behind banks of clouds and shed a flood of light upon the level stretch below. When they were within several hundred yards of their destination, the ponies were ridden to a clump of cottonwoods, and there tied so that they would be out of sight of any one who might happen to pass that way. Having made the horses fast, the trio went forward on foot, keeping very near the fringe of trees which lined the banks of the stream.

This stream passed within a couple of hundred feet of the nearest of the buildings. Back of these, about three hundred yards, was the camp of the soldiers. As the three Indians cautiously made their way along the stream, they heard the cry of the sentry calling the hour, and adding, "All is well." The little house in which the chief was confined lay between the building and the creek. It was no more than fifty feet from the one, and about three times that distance from the other. It had been intended for use until the officer in charge should receive orders either to build a heavy guard-house, or to take the captive to a military post. The nearest of these was on the Missouri River, about two hundred miles distant.

The building had two small windows in the gable ends, higher up from the floor than one could reach. The door was strongly made of oak, hung with heavy hinges at top and bottom, and secured across the middle by an iron bar. It would be almost impossible to break it open without a crow-bar. The windows were too small to admit the passage of a body as large as that of the chief. So the party of rescue was at a loss to understand what was the best course to pursue, and they consulted for some time before they arrived at a definite plan of operation.

Leaving the medicine-man and his squaw at the back of the house, Strong Heart went to the fringe of cottonwoods, taking advantage of a few moments of darkness, when the moon was behind clouds, and cut a heavy stick about five feet in length and four inches in diameter. As his knife was rather heavy and very sharp, this did not

take much time, and he was soon back with the others, carrying the club in his hand.

Rain-in-the-face heard the approach of his friends, and knowing that they would attempt his release, placed himself in one corner where there was a slight crevice between the boards, and whispered:

"What are you going to do? Are you planning to break open the door? It is too heavy, and you had better not attempt to break it, as the noise will arouse the guards. They come here every thirty minutes. As soon as you see them approach you must run back to the timber, keeping in the shadow of the building as long as possible. They came here about fifteen minutes ago, and you had better not do anything until they go away the next time."

The medicine-man explained that Strong Heart had gone to the timber after a heavy stick, and that they would make the attempt to pry off one of the wide boards in the rear of the little house. It was not weather-boarded, planks about fourteen inches wide being nailed up and down from the rafters to the sills, so that this would not be difficult. As soon as Strong Heart returned he was told about the visit of the guards, and the three withdrew into the dark shade of the timber, leaving the chief in his prison. Scarcely had they disappeared when two soldiers approached, walked around the building once, and then returned to their camp.

The backs of these guards had hardly been turned before they ran quickly from their covert, and telling the chief to be ready to push with all his strength against

the board that they endeavoured to pry from its fastenings, they made ready their lever for the attempt.

A large chunk of wood had been brought from the creek-bank. This was placed at the bottom of a plank that looked rather insecure. Strong Heart put one end of the stick under the end of the board, and using the chunk as a fulcrum, bore down on his lever with all his might, and sprung the bottom of the board forward some four inches. As the end of his lever was bent to the ground in doing this, he could not move it out further. Wanneta slipped into the space which held the board, and left the stick free to be withdrawn. Moving his fulcrum higher up, he again inserted his lever, and aided by the chief, who was pushing with all his might from within, sprung the plank from its fastenings, so that it fell with a loud clatter on the ground. Rain-in-the-face immediately leaped through the opening.

Without waiting to notice whether the noise had been heard at the camp or not, the three seized him by the arms, and chuckling gleefully over his escape, rushed him over the ground to the ponies. Scarcely had they mounted their horses, having put the chief upon an extra one brought for him, when loud shouts from the soldiers reached their ears, and they knew that the guard had discovered the escape of the prisoner, and were calling out the cavalry.

The four ponies bearing the Indians were well across the plain before the cavalrymen had saddled their heavy horses, and formed in company order ready to advance. When they did get fairly underway, the chief and his

liberators were in the Sioux camp, receiving the congratulations of his friends.

It had been decided by the council, held the previous night, that the village should move at once upon the escape of Rain-in-the-face, and join that of Sitting Bull. So when the trio left for the rescue, the braves and squaws were already busily engaged taking down the wigwams, binding the ends of the lodge-poles to the backs of the ponies, and upon these fastening their household goods. No camp ever moves more rapidly than does an Indians', when for some reason they decide to break up. The red man owns very little that is cumbersome or heavy, and when he decides to change his place, although he works rather leisurely, it does not take him more than one or two hours to get everything in readiness for transportation.

Two Bears had taken down his lodge, and had assisted some friendly young fellows to take down that of Strong Heart also, so that when he and his squaw reached home they found the lodge-poles fastened to the ponies' backs, their buffalo skins upon the poles, and everything in readiness for a rapid march.

After the few congratulations were over, it was decided to spend no time in foolish forms and pow-wows such as Indians are prone to indulge in. So the entire tribe moved toward the north, guided by the moon above and their knowledge of the country. Some three hundred young braves, well mounted and armed, were left to cover the rear of the tribe on its retreat.

They had been gone some twenty minutes, moving at a

tolerably fast trot, and had passed over some three miles, when the cavalry arrived on the site of the abandoned village. Lieutenant Custer called a halt, and sent his guides and trail-hunters out in various directions, to ascertain which way the tribe had moved. It did not take them long to see that the Sioux had gone to the north. He judged rightly that it was their intention to join Sitting Bull. He knew that if they should succeed in uniting their forces to those of that great chief, it would be impossible for him, with the small force he had at command, to meet successfully in the field so large a force of well-armed warriors as the two bodies could muster. He did not know how far distant Sitting Bull was, and on account of the hasty departure of the tribe, concluded that he was within fifty miles. As the Indians were better mounted than his men, and as they probably had a rear-guard, he decided not to follow until the next morning.

This decision was a mistake, for Sitting Bull was eighty miles away. He should have followed up and attacked the tribe without delay. His Gatling guns and the darkness would have given him an advantage. But for some reason or other he did not attempt to pursue, and bivouacked for the night upon the same spot that had been two hours before the site of a large and thriving Indian town.

The Sioux moved as rapidly as possible all that night, and about eight o'clock next morning came in sight of Sitting Bull's camp. The three miles between them and the camp were traversed in the best of spirits, a feeling

of security having filled the minds of all, and fear and anxiety for the safety of the chief being dispelled.

Sitting Bull and his warriors saw the tribe approaching, and knowing that good news was coming, impatiently rushed forward to meet the advancing band. Rain-in-the-face rode in the front, and, rushing up to him, the great chief actually embraced his brother, so glad was he at his escape from the soldiers.

"We will not attempt to talk over matters here," said he; "I will call a great council, and you shall tell them how you were freed. We can decide what course to pursue at this council, and will select a number of our young men to act as guard to the camp, and others as scouts to inspect the territory for a hundred miles in every direction. Thus, Long Hair will not approach us without our knowledge."

The sight of this body of Indians moving into Sitting Bull's camp was a very interesting one. Some of them had papooses strapped upon their backs or over a pile of furs across some pony. Others were leading the patient horses which were drawing the long lodge-poles, whose ends trailed behind them. Nearly all rode. Sitting Bull and his head warriors pointed out favourable spots to the new-comers to erect their lodges. Before noon, the village, which had been transported so many miles, was put up again in just as good a condition as when it was taken down. No one but an Indian could have told that it was not a part of Sitting Bull's camp, and that the two had not always been one.

The council was announced that afternoon by a runner

who sped through the long village, and cried out at intervals that the chiefs were assembled in the central square, and that all the men should attend.

This was one of the most important councils ever held in the history of the Sioux nation. There were seven prominent chiefs present, and nearly two thousand warriors. As a matter of course, Sitting Bull spoke first, and as his speech may be of interest, I give it in full.

"My people:—We have with us now many strong warriors who have come from the southern reservation. Their chief, Rain-in-the-face, will tell you why they have come, and of their wrongs. All I wish to say is, that being Sioux, they are welcome here, and that they and we will form one large village, which shall not be broken up, even at the word of the Great Father at Washington.

"Chief Rain-in-the-face, I may say by way of introduction, was captured by the whites, put in jail like a dog, and accused of a crime he never committed. The soldiers, led by Long Hair's brother, are coming to take him back to prison. We will not let him go, and if Long Hair comes here he comes to his death."

At the conclusion of his speech, Sitting Bull motioned to Rain-in-the-face, and then took his seat at the head of the council. Rain-in-the-face unwrapped his blanket and arose with due gravity. He acknowledged the grunts of approval from the assembled multitude, and as soon as the noise was hushed, began in the following words:

"Two white men started out from Long Hair's camp some days ago with dispatches. They had occasion to pass near our village. Two of our young men rode out

to see what they wanted, when, mistaking our people's intentions, the whites fired upon the two braves, killing one of them. The other returned the fire and killed both the Long Knives. For this crime I was put in jail by the whites, and they refused to hear any explanation.

"Last night, my son, Strong Heart, his squaw and our medicine-man came to my prison, pried off one of the planks and set me free. Expecting my release, my people were in readiness to move here. As soon as we reached our camp, I found all the tipis tied up and the tribe in order for marching. As the soldiers were but a little way behind us we pushed on without delay, and here we are.

"Now, what I want to say is that Long Hair's brother will probably march against us. I would advise, therefore, that all the young men be ready to fight, and that scouts with fleet ponies be sent in six or eight directions to watch for the coming of the cavalry."

At the conclusion of his speech the Indians gave a tremendous grunt, expressing their satisfaction. Spotted Tail then arose and selected fifty young men to go out as scouts, in parties of five each, over the country about them and see if Long Hair or any of his people were coming to attack them. These young men set out immediately.

A few matters pertaining to the tribe were arranged during the council, and then the whole body broke up, and each departed to his lodge to seek the rest which many of them needed badly after having been upon the trail all night.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE COUNCIL WITH GENERAL CUSTER.

General Custer was at the new town of Deadwood when he heard through a messenger of the escape of Rain-in-the-face. He had cautioned his brother to keep a guard at the prison all the time, but the lieutenant had not followed his directions, and had required the sentry to visit the house every half-hour only. Young Custer was a daring, reckless fellow, whole-souled, but with little caution, and his carelessness was often the cause of serious trouble.

As soon as the general heard of the escape of the chief, knowing that the town of Deadwood did not need his troops longer, he set out on forced marches, and reached his brother fifty-five miles above him, late on the night of the day that the news came.

They now had a combined force of three hundred and fifty men, and feeling strong enough to attack the Sioux, they decided to move northward in two or three days.

As soon as the general arrived, he held a long interview with his brother. The next morning, as it was a clear, beautiful day, and as he wished to give the men and the animals a chance to rest, he proposed that they take a walk. So the two lighted their cigars, and started up the creek-bank, attended by two orderlies.

"Tom," said the general, "why the devil didn't you leave a guard at that old rascal's pen night and day? Had you done this, as I wanted you to, he would not have got away. It was a very foolish thing not to have done so, and it serves you right that the man outwitted you. Have you any idea who let him out?"

Tom thought a moment, and then replied: "Yes, I have. The day of his release his daughter-in-law, Wanneta, who, by the way, is one of the prettiest Indian girls I ever saw, came here and begged with tears in her eyes to be allowed to see the old rascal. I thoughtlessly gave her leave, because I couldn't resist her pleading, and she went in and stayed nearly all the afternoon with the chief. I think now that they were then concocting a scheme to let him out, and that when she returned to the village she told her people all about his surroundings, the insecure building in which he was confined, and the coming and going every half hour of the watch. They probably held a grand council over this and planned to set the old fellow free. We found a stout lever the morning after he got away, at the back of the building. This had been used in prying off one of the planks. When they did it, they made such a racket that we heard them, and my orderlies roused the cavalry. We marched to the village as quickly as we could, but the birds had flown, and there was nothing left to mark the site except broken lodge-poles, fragments of dishes, and rotten hides. Take it all in all, it was a very clever piece of work."

"I think," said Custer, "that the War Department at Washington will confine these Indians to their agency.

It is advisable to keep them from going upon the war-path, and everything possible should be done to prevent bloodshed and the murder of settlers. They are not such bad fellows as the Secretary thinks, and it would be very foolish to anger them without cause. I sincerely trust that there will be no occasion for us to attack them. They are, probably, at Sitting Bull's camp. His village is upon their reservation; they have not as yet left their boundaries and have broken none of their agreements, except by the murder of our messengers, and that they murdered them except in self-defense is most strenuously denied by all the Sioux."

"You will have a hard time," replied his brother, "in keeping these fellows down. They mean mischief; they are very tricky, and it seems to me utterly impracticable to get along with them without resorting to force. We had better wait for the order that you expect to-morrow, but I would not advise stopping longer than that. We can move up to their camp, hold a parley with them, and, if they will not do as the Government wants, begin hostilities without further delay."

"What time would you advise setting out for their camp?" inquired Custer.

"I would make the start about daybreak, Wednesday morning."

The general thought a moment, and then replied: "I like your scheme, and unless I hear to the contrary from Washington, will move northward with the whole command on Wednesday."

The two talked some time longer, then returned to the

agency, where they spent the afternoon in writing letters. At dark that night a messenger arrived from the railroad bringing two dispatches, which, when Custer tore open and examined, he found to have the same purport. One was from Washington and one from the general commanding the department. They directed him under no circumstances to attack the Sioux villages unless he was first attacked by the Indians, and to endeavour to persuade the tribe to return quietly to their reservation.

Custer read the dispatches, and then handed them to his brother without a word. The young man glanced over them, and while not at all pleased at their contents, knew that orders must be obeyed; so, handing them back, he turned upon his heel and walked out of the tent, muttering to himself as he withdrew.

At the Sioux camp, in the centre of the village, many of the young men were engaged in a war-dance. Here and there were groups of three and four passing away the time in their favourite way, gambling. Many others were practicing with the bow and arrow or rifle, while some distance to one side, a noisy crowd was betting on an amateur horse-race. Thus the whole camp presented a scene of great activity, every one being engaged in some sport or pastime. The scouts had been out about twelve hours, and as yet no news had been brought in of the approach of Long Hair and his troops.

In a pleasant spot in the village was placed the tipi of our two young friends, Strong Heart and Wanneta. They had made many new acquaintances during their brief stay, and were enjoying themselves hugely. They had

had many visitors during the morning, for the fame of the young warrior who had so gallantly defended his bride against thirty Crows, had spread all through Dakota, and one needed only to mention his name to hear recited an exaggerated account of his deeds of valour.

"Strong Heart," said Wanneta, as they found themselves alone after a time, "what will become of the village in case Long Hair should attack us? Will the women and children take the lodges down and flee to the Bad Lands, or will the warriors meet the army in the open field?"

"In case an attack should be made it is impossible now to say what would occur," replied her husband. "I do not know what we should do. You must nerve yourself, my dear Wanneta, to see horrible sights and to pass through trying scenes during the next few days. The young men of the tribe are bent on securing scalps, and it will take but one act of war on the part of Long Hair to cause the murder of many settlers and gold-hunters. When once the Sioux warriors are stirred up to deeds of violence, no one knows where they will stop."

"You will not join them in cold-blooded murder!" cried Wanneta. "As your squaw, I forbid it. I will countenance war, but I will not give consent to wanton murder."

"I will not aid murder, nor will I commit any crime. I will defend my people against the attacks of the Long Knives. Further than this I will not go."

During the remainder of the day the husband and wife were together almost constantly. It was evening when he left her, and went to the council-house. There

was no regular council in progress, but a number of chiefs were talking over the situation in a quiet way, while the usual band of hangers-on were listening to catch each word that fell from the lips of the rulers of the nation.

About seven o'clock, before it had grown dark, seven or eight of the scouts came dashing into camp, and riding directly to the council-house, called out that Custer and his soldiers were no more than twenty miles south of their village. They said that the column was moving in military order, and that without doubt an attack was meditated.

Sitting Bull called the council, and as soon as the nation was assembled, addressed the meeting as follows:

"Long Hair is coming with his whole army. There remains nothing for us to do but fight. Therefore, at break of day let all the warriors be armed, mounted upon their ponies, ready to move against the soldiers. Let Crazy Horse have charge of the right of our body, let Spotted Tail take the left, let Young-man-afraid-of-his-horses, with a scouting party, be in front, while I, myself, and Chief Rain-in-the-face will command the centre. Let the women and children remain in the camp, be ready to take down the lodges, and flee into the Bad Lands, should the soldiers march toward our camp.

"In case Long Hair wishes to hold a parley, we will hear what he has to say before we attack him."

Speeches were made by all the chiefs present, and it was not long before the assembled warriors, encouraged and stimulated by the words of their superiors, had all sworn to defend the village against the attacks of the Long

Knives, to drive the hated white men out of their territory, and cause them to return whence they came.

All that night preparations for the great battle were going on. Knives were sharpened, rifles and pistols were put in good order, and the ammunition was carefully examined to see that it was in perfect condition.

At break of day the whole village was astir. The women and children were encouraging their husbands and brothers to be of strong arm, to strike hard and to spare none. The braves were gathering together in bands under the head warriors. A number of these combined were led by a sub-chief, under the direction of the two great chiefs in command. They were quite well organized, and felt confident of success in the coming conflict.

As the sun arose in all his glory over the eastern hills, his rays fell upon a strange and picturesque army gathered upon the undulating plain. Every warrior had eagle feathers stuck in his scalp-lock, his body was brightly painted, and upon his pony's back he had thrown a folded blanket. This he intended to wave, yelling as he did so, in the hope of scaring the large and heavy horses of the cavalrymen. As the Sioux advanced to the front their guns glistened in the sunlight, their spirited ponies pranced and danced, partaking of the buoyant feelings of their riders. The gentle breeze stirred their plumes, and caused the beaded frocks to rise and fall, or gently wave from side to side in graceful motion.

At a long-drawn cry from the chief, the whole assembly advanced at a sharp trot, then gradually disappeared from the sight of the anxious watching women left behind in

the village. They had advanced but an hour over the rolling prairie, when they saw before them a cloud of dust arising, and knowing that Long Hair was coming, hid themselves in a convenient ravine, to await his approach. Some twenty scouts and warriors, led by Young-man-afraid-of-his-horses, dashed ahead to lure the general and his command to their death in this ravine.

When Custer's force was about half a mile distant, it came to a halt, to their great surprise, and an interpreter and three or four officers, with an escort of six cavalrymen bearing a white flag, galloped forward. At sight of this one of the chiefs, with five of his warriors, advanced cautiously to meet the truce party, and to inquire what they wanted.

When the two were within speaking distance, Custer's interpreter called out:

"We have important and good news for the Sioux nation. Go back and tell Sitting Bull to meet us here directly, and we will hold a parley and read to you dispatches from the Great Father, in which are promised peace and annuities if the Sioux will return to their reservation."

All this was said in such good faith that the hostile Sioux were completely taken aback. Calling out a few words to the interpreter, they galloped back to their waiting army, and, dashing up to Sitting Bull and Rain-in-the-face, informed them that the Great Father had listened to their appeals, and that General Custer wished them to come to a parley.

The chiefs consulted together. While they were anx-

ious to fight, they thought it best to hear first what the Great Father had to say. So they sent the advance party back, bearing with them a piece of white buck skin, with the news that they would come to a parley within an hour.

General Custer, with his officers, interpreters, and a strong escort, advanced several hundred yards in front of his command, and there awaited the approach of the Sioux. The opposing parties, as they came toward each other, presented a spectacle well worthy of study. On the one hand was an army representing the civilization of the nineteenth century; on the other, one composed of barbarians who were yet armed with the weapons of civilization. A strange and peculiar combination this.

Sitting Bull and Rain-in-the-face, with their chiefs and a hundred warriors, came forward to the spot where Custer stood. The other Indians remained in the background and looked upon the proceedings in silence. Custer did not leave the chiefs long in doubt as to what he proposed to do, but, opening his dispatches, read to them the words already quoted on an earlier page. The Great Father offered them peace, and asked in return the surrender of the murderer. After the reading of these dispatches, the general spoke a few words:

"I intend in a few days to withdraw my troops from your reservation and leave you to yourselves. The gold-hunters will be driven out, and we shall not again enter this section, unless you commit crimes against the white people who may happen to pass through your lands.

"We do not want to have any trouble with you; all

we ask is the surrender of the murderer, Rain-in-the-face. Will you give him up, or must I use force to take him?"

Chief Sitting Bull rose to his feet, and, turning to General Custer, related the full particulars of the murder. He explained in a most forcible way how it happened, and, turning to the young man present, who did this shooting, said: "Young brave, tell the general how this thing happened."

The young warrior told, with every detail, of the shooting of the messenger and the doctor; of how they had first fired upon his companion, were about to fire upon him, and how he had shot them in self-defense. Then, straightening up to his full height, and, looking squarely at Custer, he cried out, "If there is going to be serious trouble over this matter, if you insist upon an arrest, why take the man who had nothing to do with it? Why not take the real person, *myself*, and let the punishment fall upon him. I am ready to suffer for the good of my people; take me instead of the chief."

Before Custer could reply Rain-in-the-face sprang to his feet, and addressed the assembly:

"I wish to say that this killing was accidental, and that I had nothing to do with it. You have heard the offer of the young man who has just spoken. If he were guilty, he would not make such an offer. You know well, Long Hair, that this testimony given in one of your courts would be accepted as conclusive of the innocence of this man.

"We have listened to the good words from the Great

Father, and although our young men are very angry, and it will be hard to pacify them, yet if you will do all that you have promised, we will return to our camp and lay aside our arms. We want the gold-hunters driven out, and we do not want to give up our rifles, because we cannot hunt if we do not have them."

Custer listened with great attention, and answered:

"I believe now that you have been telling the truth, and think that the Great Father made a mistake in sending me here against you. I do not attach any blame to your young man here, nor do I insist upon the surrender of Rain-in-the-face. If you will agree to return to your reservation I will move my men back to Deadwood, and drive out the gold-hunters from the reservation. I am glad we have come to an understanding, and I must say that you have acted in a straightforward manner, and have done all that I could expect—nay, even more. I will wire the Great Father at once of the agreement we have made, and have no doubt but he will approve it. I wish to shake hands with all the chiefs present, in token of good faith."

As the interpreter translated this, the Indians expressed great satisfaction, and grunted among themselves their approval. Custer walked around the circle, shaking hands and saying "How, how," with each chief in turn until he had saluted them all.

Then Sitting Bull said:

"Chief Long Hair, we wish you to understand that Rain-in-the-face has been wrongly imprisoned, and that, while we return to the reservation, this is the last time

that we shall ever ask any favours of the whites. If your people break any more pledges with us, they must not expect to escape without a war. I promise to control my young men this time, but if any more of our chiefs are imprisoned falsely, I will not be responsible for what happens. I have done."

"I am very sorry," said Custer, "that this mistake occurred, and I will do all in my power to rectify it. I will tell the Great Father that you took a sensible view of the matter, and that you did not commit any murders. I am certain that he will send you many rations in return for your wise decision. I will take my men away at once, as I see that you are now good Indians. You promise me to return to your reservations without further trouble, do you?"

"We give you our word," said Sitting Bull, "and will do as we say. If you will return to your people, we will return to ours, and there need be no more trouble."

Rain-in-the-face, whose impulsive nature had allowed him to become greatly interested in this talk, which made him forget, in a measure, his wrongs, now sprang to his feet, and calling out to Custer and the assembled multitude, said:

"I will overlook this matter of imprisonment for the present, trusting that it is for the good of the Sioux nation. But I want Long Hair to keep all his promises to us, and we will keep ours to him."

Then Custer asked the Sioux if there was anything more to be said, and receiving a negative reply, he turned to his officers and said:

"Return to the command and order them to march at once for Deadwood."

Then he said, "How, how," once more, and stalked out of the circle. As the whites withdrew the Indians arose, and gravely wrapping their blankets about their bodies, returned to the waiting host of braves.

As they approached the warriors a great shout of anger went up, for the Indians could see that this council had ended in peace, which was not at all to their liking. Custer heard the shout, and knew that it rose from thousands of men who were thirsting for a fight, and were enraged at their disappointment. He understood readily how hard it would be for the nation to be controlled, and made up his mind that Sitting Bull would certainly have his hands full in quelling what seemed like a mutiny. He decided to do all in his power to influence the authorities at Washington to have no more troops sent into the Black Hills.

Sitting Bull, Rain-in-the-face, and Spotted Tail went among the warriors and argued with them for a long time before they reduced them to submission. At last they succeeded in quieting their restless spirits, and having secured a promise from nearly all that none should take the war-path, the whole army turned about and retraced the trail which they had made in coming out to attack the Long Knives.

CHAPTER XXII.

CONCLUSION.

THE Indians wended their way across the plain in silence, save for the mutterings of some disappointed young man who had hoped to return with several scalps dangling at his belt. How different was this return from what they had expected when they set out in the morning!

When within sight of the village, they were met by a party of old men and women, who rushed out to ascertain why they had returned. The chiefs had little to say, and those who had come from the camp to welcome their return got but few answers in reply to their questions.

The braves reached the central portion of the village, and dismounting, threw the lariats of the ponies to the squaws, who led the animals to the corral while the men entered the council-house.

After all had assembled, while the women and children crowded round the outside, Chief Sitting Bull, who was always the first speaker, said:

"Brothers of the Sioux nation, you see that our trouble with the whites has come to a bloodless termination. While many of the young men are disappointed, and while others are glad that we are to have no war, I myself might say that I should have liked to strike a decisive blow at these soldiers." At this a mighty shout went up.

"But as it is best for our nation to be at peace, and as the Great Father has promised us many things, I am content to let matters stay as they are.

"To our chief, Rain-in-the face, we owe a great deal, for he had been insulted by the whites and asked for no redress. Through his influence the young men decided to remain silent. He has a few words to say to you, and will speak."

Rain-in-the-face arose from his seat and addressed the Indians:

"While I think it is best to have peace, yet should the whites break faith again with us, we must not hesitate to strike back with all our might. They have done us much harm, and we have done none in return. I believe that it will not be long before they will break their faith again. When they do this it will give us an opportunity for revenge, and we have but to wait until that time comes.

"I am content, as is Sitting Bull, to let the matter rest here, but I have solemnly sworn, should there be more trouble, to cut out the heart of Long Hair's brother and thus revenge myself;" and as he said this, his face showed a fearful passion, and he lowered his voice to a fiendish whisper.

"I have a few words to say," said Strong Heart. "I was one of the most forward in this trouble, and was desirous of fighting with the whites. But since our chiefs have decided to let the Great Father give us rations and drive the gold-hunters out of our territory, I am content.

"My squaw, Wanneta, counselled caution and peace. She knows the great strength of the Long Knives, for she

was among them for many moons. She aided my father in his escape, and as peace will once more settle upon our nation, we owe her gratitude, as well as the chiefs, Sitting Bull, Rain-in-the-face, and the others."

A great shout, intended as complimentary to Wanneta, went up from the assembled throng. The young man thrilled with pleasure as he noticed this recognition on the part of his people of his wife's labours for their good. Turning to the young men now crowding around him, he cried out:

"Oh, brothers of the Sioux nation, do not take the war-path again without just cause; do not fight against the white men, for you will be defeated and destroyed. We may kill off one army, but another and another will take its place. Do as the Great Father at Washington wishes, and you will be happy, prosperous, and contented. I have done."

So the council broke up, with general good feeling on the part of all. It was understood that the Sioux from the lower reservation should return soon to their village, and that the agent should make due amends for his part in the arrest of Chief Rain-in-the-face.

Wanneta had been near the door of the council-house during the speeches, and had heard all that was said, together with the compliment conferred upon her by her nation. Overcome by the feeling which pervaded her heart, and joyful that there was to be no bloodshed, she rushed back to her wigwam, threw herself upon the bed of bear skins, and had a good cry.

Her husband about an hour later came home, and, find-

ing his wife deep in thought, understood at once her feelings. Sitting down beside her, he put his arm about her waist, and drawing her close to him, said:

"You now see, my dear, that your wish is fulfilled, and that there will be no war. It was through your efforts that this came about, and to you, above all others, I owe a debt of thanks."

As he spoke, all that she had learned that was good and noble in the East came back like a flood overwhelming her. She would have given much to have her teachers know of it all, for they would have been delighted to learn that she had done something to elevate her people and turn them into the paths of peace.

The village was broken up a few days later, and Rain-in-the-face and all his command moved back to the lower agency to take up their abode upon the old site.

Soon everything was back in shape, and daily life went on in the same old way, and all, especially Wanneta and Strong Heart, were happy.

The agent came to the village and in a shame-faced sort of way apologized to Chief Rain-in-the-face for his part in his imprisonment. With him came young Tom Custer himself and his brother, the general.

An interpreter led the two white men to Strong Heart's tipi, and there they had a brief talk.

"I have come," said young Custer, "to pay my respects to the young woman who so cleverly outwitted me the day that I allowed her to enter her father-in-law's prison. It was a very sharp trick indeed, and I could not resist the temptation of meeting her here in her own home."

Strong Heart and Wanneta, who were standing in the entrance of their tipi during this speech, both laughed outright, and, shaking hands with their visitors, asked them to sit down.

Strong Heart told of his fight with the Crows and a number of other incidents in his life, in which they were greatly interested.

As the two brothers left, General Custer turned to the young woman, and complimenting her again, said:

"If we had more like you among the Indian tribes, there would be no wars, no misunderstandings, and few crimes committed. I sincerely trust that you and your husband will continue to exert an influence for good upon this tribe. I shall have the Great Father send you a beautiful gold medal in honour of this occasion."

Shaking hands with them both and bidding them goodbye, the famous Indian fighter and his brother departed to join their troops.

For many happy months, with no interruptions and without scenes of violence, the village occupied its pleasant site upon the creek banks.

Let us leave Wanneta and Strong Heart in their happiness and the Sioux nation in peace, hearing, as we turn away, the glad song of this Indian squaw as she goes about her household duties with a heart full of happiness at the change in the fortunes of her people and the prospect of peace and quietness.

THE END.

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